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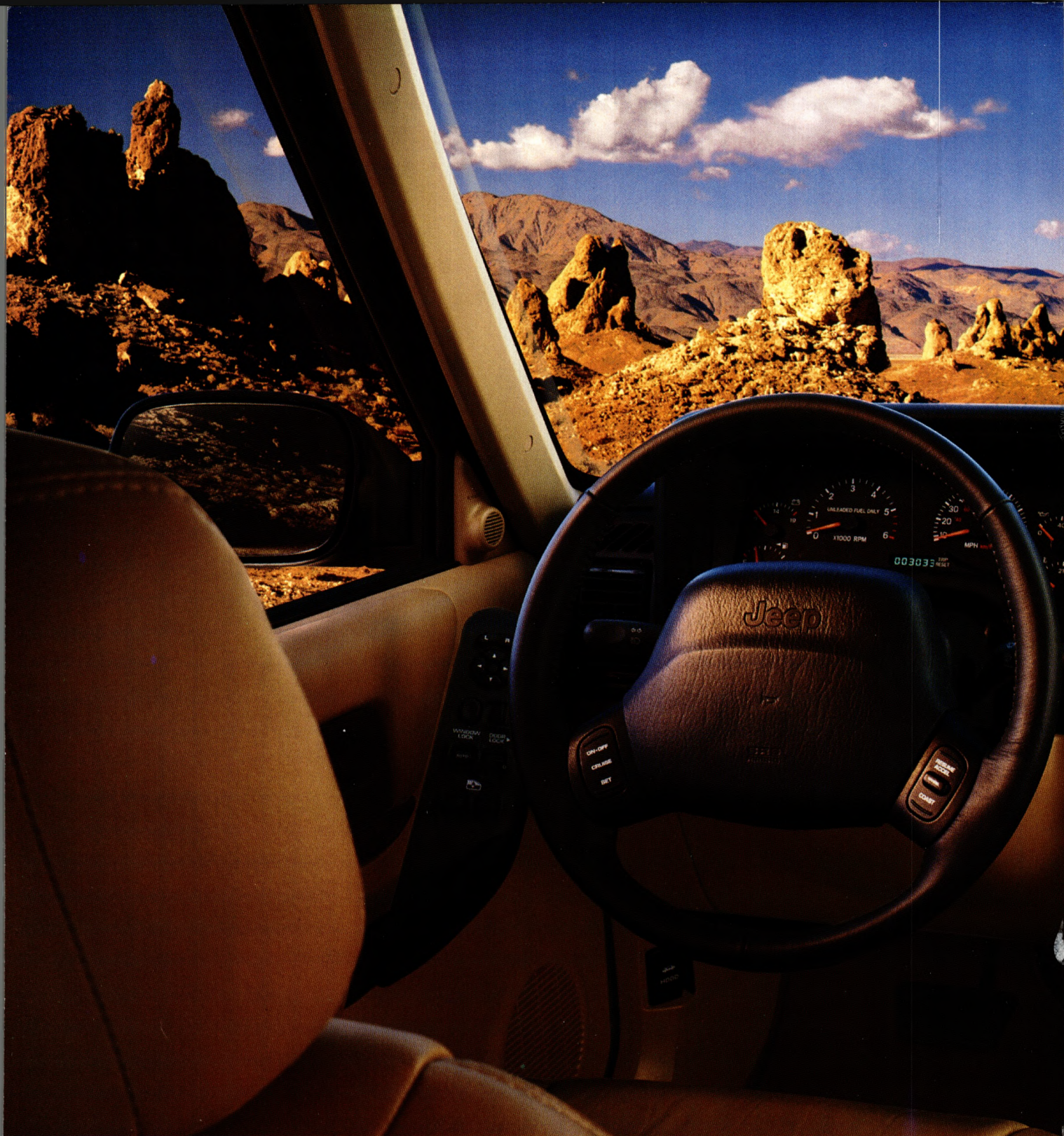
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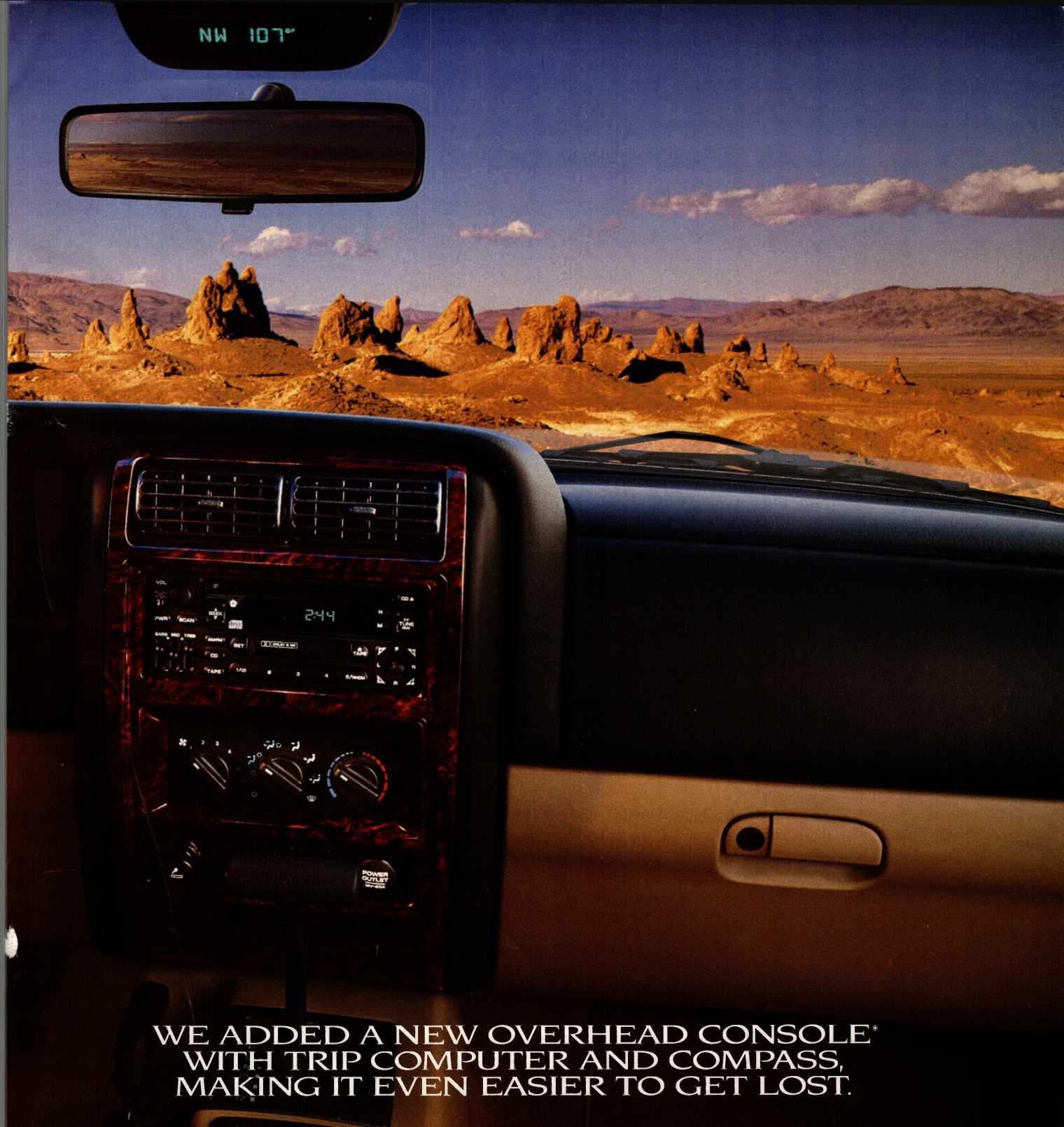




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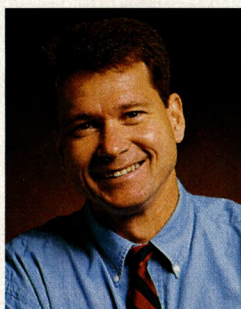
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BEHIND THE LINES

A Dangerous Myth

By David Taylor

Question: What do the following statements have in common?

"The Great Barrier Reef marine park was designed to protect the reef from divers, right?"

INTERVIEW, USA TODAY REPORTER

"[One] of the biggest threats to coral reefs [is] poorly managed boating, diving and other recreational activities."

BROCHURE, NATIONAL
AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE

"1.6 million divers each year negatively impact the resources of the Keys."

DOUG KELLY, MANAGING
EDITOR, FLORIDA SPORTSMAN

Answer: Each statement is false, part of a broad-based, highly mistaken notion that divers can do significant harm to coral reefs. But aquariums, newspaper reporters and anglers aren't the only ones who have bought into a myth that has all the credibility of an Elvis sighting. Divers themselves are often made to feel guilty about doing the very thing they love.

The result is unfortunate and potentially tragic. Unfortunate because the vast majority of

divers have more respect for the ocean environment than virtually any other group of water enthusiasts. Like backpackers, our goal is minimal impact as we observe the natural world, admire and learn from it, allow it to enrich our lives. The myth is potentially tragic because it misdirects our energy and attention away from the real threats to coral reefs: destructive fishing, coastal development, pollution and global climate change.

One of the key groups trying to dispel the myth of diver damage is the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, begun by Ned DeLoach and Paul Humann in 1990. Contrary to popular belief that touching or an errant fin stroke can lead to

a coral colony's death, REEF has found that corals are quite resilient to moderate physical damage. DeLoach writes: "In comparison to the reef's real and immediate problems, damage to coral reefs from recreational diving is trivial. If it weren't for the concerns and efforts of the diving community, there would be few, if any, environmental laws, mooring buoy systems or marine ecological reserves protecting coral reef habitats today. The fact is, if there were twice as many recreational divers and snorkelers visiting coral reef ecosystems, the world's remaining reefs would be twice as safe, not twice as damaged." Scientists agree. NOAA's Jim Bohnsack says emphatically, "The damage done by divers is at worst aesthetic and in no way threatens the overall health of the reef."

A past recipient of the Robert Rodale Environmental Award, REEF's primary mission is to use volunteer divers to create the only worldwide database on reef fish biodiversity and range. Can they do it? Will it matter? A 1996 study in the *Bulletin of Marine Science* pronounced REEF's data collection methods both

valid and useful. This acceptance of REEF's methods by the scientific community helps pave the way for broader use of the data by

marine sanctuary managers and ocean scientists who advise government officials on the protection of coral reef environments.

Most importantly, the success of REEF and its 8,000-plus members clearly demonstrates that divers can be a powerful force for preserving the marine environment. Not only do our tourism dollars create a barrier to exploitative uses, through groups such as REEF we can actually provide crucial and much-needed information to governments and scientists. The bottom line is that divers are potentially some of our oceans' most powerful and effective ambassadors.

Never believe otherwise.

To Join REEF

Membership is free. For more information on REEF and how you can participate in field surveys, phone: (305) 451-0312; e-mail: reef003@aol.com; or visit REEF's web site: www.reef.org.

Rodale's SCUBA DIVING

EXECUTIVE EDITOR David Taylor
TRAVEL DIRECTORY EDITOR Nick Lucey
SENIOR EDITOR Robert S. Butler
SCUBALAB DIRECTOR Jon Hardy
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Keith Phillips
ASSISTANT EDITOR Patricia Wuest
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Belinda F. Triplett
RECEPTIONIST Bobbie Disley
FIELD EDITORS John Francis, Ventura, CA; Bob Friel, Miami, FL; Paul Kvinta, Austin, TX; Lance Leonhardt, Whitehall, PA; Bucky McMahon, Rincón, Puerto Rico; Karen Shelanski, New York, NY; Samuel Shelanski, New York, NY; Franklin Viola, Atlanta, GA

ART DIRECTOR Janice Shay
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR Ann Geisinger
CONTRIBUTORS Curtis Boggs, Cathy Church, Chris Crumley, Paul Humann, Alex Kirkbride, Mark M. Lawrence, Amos Nachoum, M. Timothy O'Keefe, Doug Perrine, Steve Simonsen, Wes Skiles, Marty Snyderman

ONLINE EDITOR Blake Ellis Jr.
ONLINE DESIGNER Iris A. Mekker

MAIN EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING OFFICE
6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405
(912) 351-0855, Fax: (912) 351-0735
e-mail address: RSDmgzn@aol.com
World Wide Web: <http://www.scubadiving.com/>

PUBLISHER Dane B. Farnum
PROMOTIONS MANAGER Susan W. Smith
ADVERTISING ARTIST LaTrelle Ferrelle
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Kevin R. Whitworth
BILLING COORDINATOR Colleen Abruzzi
CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER Laura Chiles
SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES MANAGER Michele Steele
DIRECT SALES MANAGER Charlotte M. Walker
DIRECTOR, RETAIL SALES Chuck Tripp
V.P., RODALE ACTIVE TITLES Peter Spiers

SALES OFFICES
NEW YORK 733 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017 (212) 697-2040, Fax: (212) 697-8715 Eric Zencenko (212) 573-0387; e-mail: RSDZinc@aol.com; Sharon Fogarty, Sales Assistant
CALIFORNIA Andrew Wiens, 48 Glen Summer Rd., Pasadena, CA 91105, (818) 577-8768, Fax: (818) 568-1964; e-mail: a7wiens@aol.com; Debbie Edwards, 800 Silverado #305, La Jolla, CA 92037 (619) 551-0430, Fax: (619) 551-0615; e-mail: DErsmag@aol.com; Rhonda Messex, Sales Assistant
GEORGIA 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405 (912) 351-0855, Fax: (912) 351-0890 Dane B. Farnum, Publisher (912) 351-6233, Jan Britt (912) 351-6224; e-mail: JBrittRSD@aol.com, Laura Settles & Rhonda Messex, Sales Assistants
DETROIT Dave McAfee, 901 Wilshire Dr., Ste. 300, Troy, MI 48084 (810) 269-8880, Fax: (810) 269-8886
EMMAUS, PA Cheryl Haughney, 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098 (610) 967-8211, Fax: (610) 967-7793; e-mail: RSDCheryl@aol.com, Laura Settles, Sales Assistant

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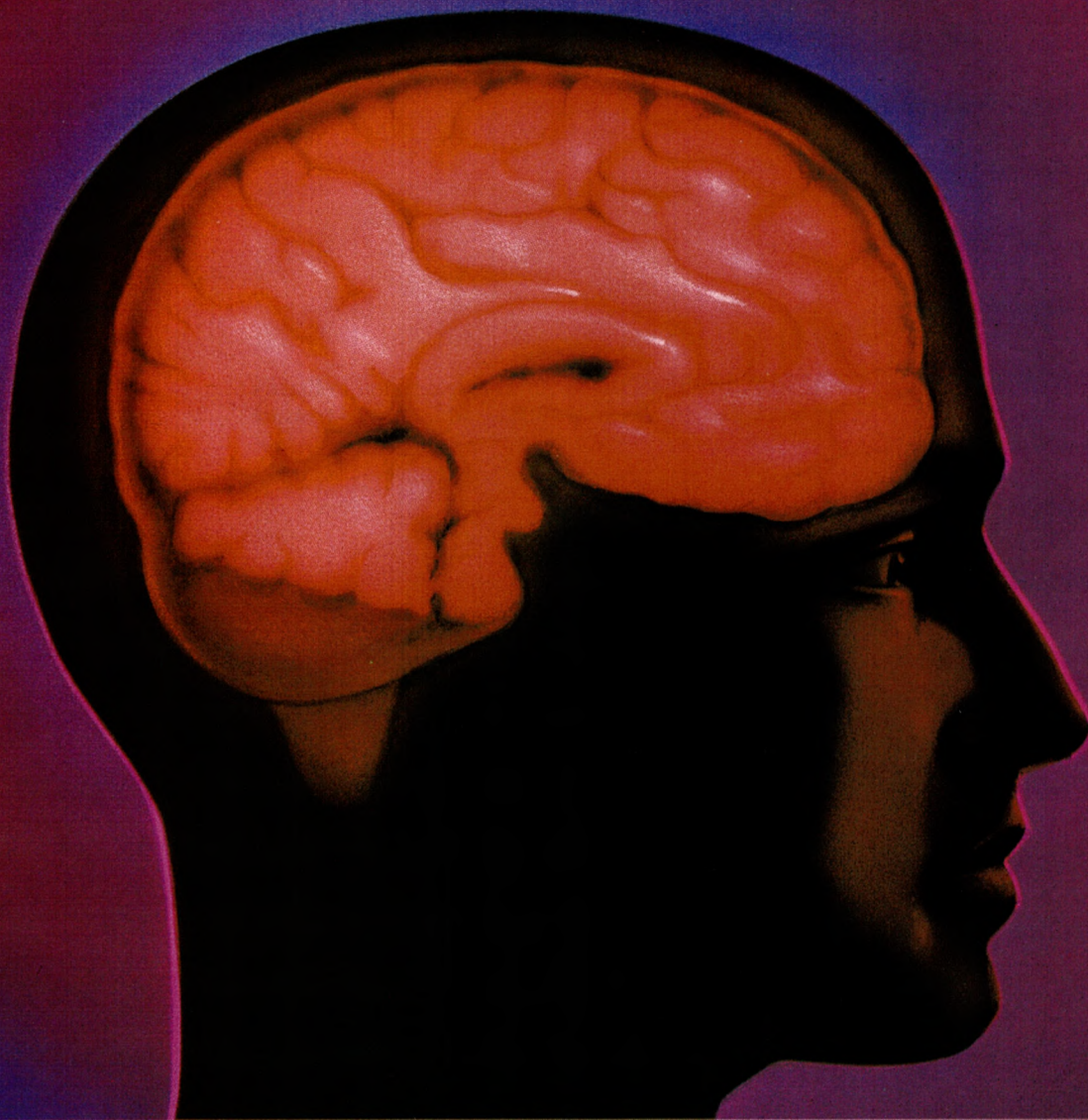
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CONTENTS

Volume 6, number 4, issue 45

FEATURE

22 TREASURE OF THE CHAPADA DIAMANTINA An RSD expedition to Brazil's outback dives an "impossible" cave, short-circuits an entire village and leaves the treasure where they find it. ~By Bucky McMahon, photography by Wes Skiles

TRAINING AND SAFETY

11 LESSONS FOR LIFE Can't we all just get along? Two divers brawl like playground children under water and almost earn permanent detention. ~By Jon Hardy

39 MAKE YOUR MASK TROUBLE-FREE A poorly fitting mask is the most common and significant problem in dive gear selection. But it doesn't have to be. Follow these guidelines to selecting and using your window on the underwater world. ~By Jon Hardy

52 ARE YOU BOAT SAVVY? Don't look like a newbie, even if you are one. Study this port-to-starboard guide to diving efficiently, politely and safely from vessels large and small. ~By John Francis

55 EQUALIZING MADE EASY Don't let ear problems ruin your expensive dive vacation. Here's how to stay pain-free during diving's ups and downs. ~By Dr. Samuel Shelanski

144 EMERGENCY WEIGHT BELT DITCHING Lose the weight, save your life. Here's how you should ditch your weights—just in case.

EQUIPMENT

17 GEAR BAG Four coats to keep you warm, a tote to save your back, and gloves to help you get a grip. ~By John Francis

29 GEAR REVIEW: 10 BEST DIVE MASKS Don't be fooled by its simplicity: The oldest piece of dive gear is still one of the hardest to get right. RSD's ScubaLab sorted through more than 50 masks to find 10 Testers' Choices.

DEPARTMENTS

2 BEHIND THE LINES A dangerous myth debunked, thanks to REEF.

6 LETTERS The debate over women in scuba, the whining good old boys club and a bigger boat for Tobago.

8 SEAVIEWS Does your government support whaling? You might be surprised at what Uncle Sam and some Native Americans have in store for gray whales. ~Edited by Keith Phillips

14 ASK RSD The longest reefs in the world, how to stay cool under water and how to breathe in cold water. Plus, Tip Talk. ~By Buck Butler



On the Cover: Photo illustration by Ann Geisinger. Photos by Joe Byrd, Alex Kirkbride, Tom Stack & Associates and Norbert Wu.



On the dock at Club
Med/Columbus Isle, San
Salvador, Bahamas.
Photography by Chris
Crumley/EarthWater Stock.

INTERNATIONAL DIVE TRAVEL DIRECTORY

61 WORLD'S BEST DIVES Want to dive Niue? Even know where it is? Our fifth annual International Dive Travel Directory will get you there and to 68 other destinations both familiar and exotic. Here's what you get: destination descriptions and ratings, dive-site maps, how to get there, and a listing of every operator we know of in the area. Plus, complete info on live-aboards and dive travel specialists worldwide.

62 Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao

- 62 Aruba
- 62 Bonaire
- 65 Curaçao

66 Australia

67 Bahamas

73 Bay Islands, Honduras

77 Belize

81 Bermuda

82 British Virgin Islands

83 California

84 Cayman Islands

89 Costa Rica

90 Eastern Caribbean

- 90 Anguilla
- 90 Antigua
- 91 Barbados
- 91 Dominica
- 91 Grenada
- 91 Guadeloupe
- 92 Martinique
- 92 Nevis
- 92 Saba
- 92 St. Barthelemy
- 92 St. Eustatius
- 92 St. Kitts
- 94 St. Lucia
- 94 St. Maarten
- 94 St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- 94 Tobago

94 Fiji

96 Florida

- 96 Florida Keys
- 99 Springs and Coast

100 Hawaii

102 Jamaica

102 Mexico

- 104 Cozumel

107 Micronesia

- 107 Chuuk (Truk)
- 107 Guam
- 108 Kosrae
- 108 Marshall Islands
- 108 Northern Marianas
- 108 Palau
- 112 Pohnpei
- 112 Yap

112 Pacific

- 112 Cook Islands
- 112 French Polynesia
- 113 Indonesia
- 113 Kiribati
- 113 Malaysia
- 113 Niue
- 113 Papua New Guinea
- 113 Solomon Islands
- 113 Tonga
- 113 Vanuatu

113 Puerto Rico

115 Red Sea/ Indian Ocean

- 115 Egypt
- 115 Seychelles

115 South America

- 115 Brazil
- 116 Venezuela

116 Turks & Caicos

118 U.S. Virgin Islands

120 Live-aboards

127 Dive Travel Specialists



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Letters

Women and Scuba

I wish to comment on Jeanne Rosner's letter (Jan./Feb. '97) in which she objected to special groups for women scuba divers. I have been an active diver for 10 years. During my initial certification classes, my male instructor (married) hit on several women in the class, creating an intimidating atmosphere that took away from the instruction. Because I took the class by myself, diving meant looking for a buddy on the boat. It was like being the last kid picked for the basketball team. No one wanted a novice female diver. Since then, I've become certified at the assistant instructor level and have observed that the dropout rate for women is much higher than it is for men. In speaking with other women, I've learned that many do not feel accepted by the mainstream. Organizations such as the Women's Scuba Association and Venus Divers, which I founded, help bridge the gap between tra-

ditional diving and women's special needs. These organizations were created not to exclude men, but to ensure that women were included. It's too bad Jeanne Rosner has not experienced the camaraderie of women divers.

PATRICIA A. NACE
DIRECTOR, VENUS DIVERS
SKIPPACK, PA.

If the Price Is Right

Your "Readers' Choice Top 100 Awards" are interesting and useful (Jan./Feb. '97). However, they would be even more helpful if there was some indication as to costs for the hotels and packages listed. I am planning a trip to Grand Cayman this year and would like to know as much as possible about the resorts and operators. I would like to be able to narrow my choices before talking to an agent. Knowing my approximate costs would keep me from spending hours poring over

brochures sent to me after I've sent faxes, e-mail or used toll-free numbers to contact hotels and dive operators. I wish RSD would publish this information in the same issue as the Top 100.

KEN WOLFE
VIA E-MAIL

Ed.'s note: The package prices that you request are published in this, our May issue, as part of our annual International Dive Travel Directory.

Extra Baggage

I was reading a British dive magazine the other day and came across an article that said golf clubs and ski equipment are not thought of as extra baggage by the airlines but scuba gear is. The article went on to say how these two sports fought to have the rules changed in their favor. Maybe the time has come for our industry to do the same for divers? I think if all



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the dive magazines and organizations come together on this we can also get the rules changed in our favor. How about it?

LABOMBA182@AOL.COM
VIA E-MAIL

Ed.'s note: Our research into this issue revealed that while most U.S.-based airlines officially have special rules for scuba equipment, they are rarely enforced. In reality, at the check-in counter a bag full of scuba gear is almost always treated as just another piece of luggage. Scuba cylinders, of course, are a very different issue. They must be prepared and packed according to DOT guidelines.

Giving 'Em the Grits

Just got the March '97 issue today. A few candid comments: We like the "Lessons for Life." Don't let the whining good old boys club dissuade you from continuing that feature. It's very good for the industry, especially those testosterone-soggy legions of young Turks who just nailed their first cert dive last

"Don't let the whining good old boys club dissuade you from continuing ..."

weekend and believe at 23 they're not only bulletproof but also bubbleproof. Since you've gone this far, why not print the names of the dive sites and dates of the accidents? Give 'em the grits.

JOHN AND SUSAN HESSBURG
DIRECTORS, U.S. DIVE TRAVEL
SEATTLE, WASH.

I wholeheartedly agree with your policy of reporting scuba accidents in your publication. As a scuba instructor, I have for many years taken small groups to Cozumel for dive trips. At first I would never tell negative stories to anyone. But then I had a diver with signs of DCS who was successfully treated at the hyperbaric facility there. What resulted was a detailed document of his diving profiles and non-diving activities that involved drugs and alcohol. Since then I've been sharing this document with divers on my trips and have never had another instance of DCS.

MIKE PALMER
AUSTIN, TEXAS

"Golf clubs and ski equipment are not thought of as extra baggage by the airlines but scuba gear is."

Where the Big Boats Are

Your article on Tobago ("Carnival of Currents," Jan/Feb '97) says, "There isn't a dive boat on the island that holds more than six customers, and more often than not, you

lug your own gear through waist-deep surf, taking only what you need for one dive at a time." This information is incorrect with regard to AquaMarine Dive Limited. We have two boats; one holds a maximum of eight divers, the other carries 14 divers. Also, our customers do not lug gear. It is carried for them to the boat where they board via a dry dock, and not waist-deep surf.

ALICE DARWENT
AQUAMARINE DIVE LIMITED
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MAY • 7

SEAVIEWS

—Edited by Keith Phillips

► CONSERVATION

Who Owns the Whales?

Despite objections from an environmental group and even some tribal elders, the seafaring Makah Indians of Washington state's Olympic Peninsula plan to resume their traditional hunt for the once-endangered gray whale.

In an 1855 treaty, the U.S. Government guaranteed the tribe's whaling rights, so with the support of the Department of Commerce, the Makah will petition the International Whaling Commission this year for "aboriginal" whaling status, and the right to take up to five California gray whales annually. Although Alaskan Inuits are already allowed a subsistence catch of 47 bowhead whales annually, some environmental groups feel the Makah request will compromise U.S. opposition to commercial whaling.

"Whaling in the United States will effectively weaken the international whale conservation movement to the benefit of Japan, Norway and Iceland, countries that seek to escalate commercial whaling activities," says Paul Watson, head of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

Although the tribe hasn't harpooned a whale since 1926, the door to resuming the tradition opened when the California gray whale was removed from the Endangered Species List in 1994. In a remarkable recovery, gray whales now number 21,000, compared to a population of 1,000 when commercial hunting was banned in 1946.

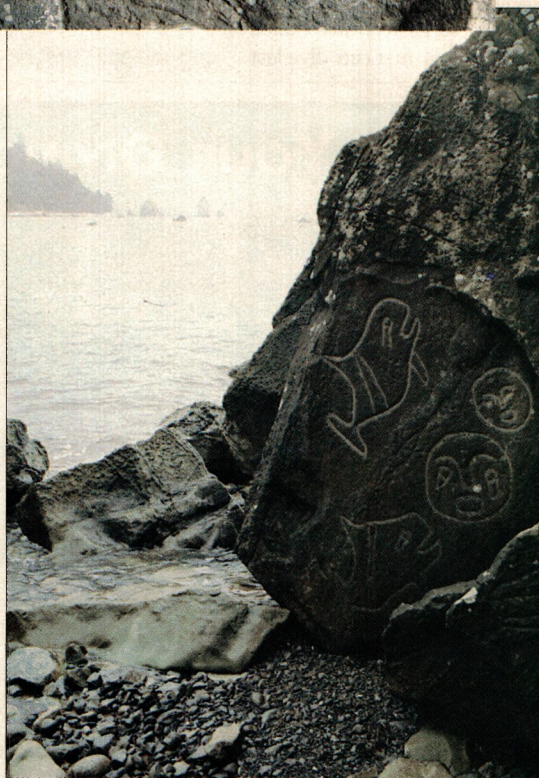
The modern Makah make their living by fishing, but nearly half of the tribe's 1,869 members live below the poverty line and whaling is seen as a way to ease seasonal unemployment. And according to the tribe's application to the IWC, "Even though we haven't hunted whales on the oceans in over 70 years, we have hunted the whales in our hearts and minds."

Not all Makah feel the motive is purely spiritual. In a letter to the *Peninsula Daily News*, several of the elders (including, at age 96, the oldest Makah), questioned the decision to resume whaling—made by only 104 of the 530 eligible voters on the Makah Tribal Council. "We believe the word 'subsistence' is the wrong thing to say when our people haven't used or had whale meat/blubber since the early 1900s," said the dissenting elders.

Environmental groups feel the Makah request could compromise U.S. opposition to commercial whaling.

In Japan, a gray whale is worth \$1 million, and although the IWC prohibits those with aboriginal rights from selling their catch, whaling opponents fear the infiltration of black markets will be hard for the Makah or other whaling tribes in Russia and Greenland to resist.

When the IWC meets in Monaco this September, it will consider the Makah request. In the meantime, the tribe has an opportunity to decide what its relationship will be with the whale in a modern world. The dissenting elders have already given their suggestion: "We prefer whale watching." —LANCE LEONHARDT



CENTURIES-OLD ROCK CARVINGS ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA ATTEST TO THE MAKAH INDIANS' LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH WHALES. THE MAKAH NOW SEEK "ABORIGINAL" STATUS AND THE RIGHT TO TAKE FIVE GRAY WHALES ANNUALLY.

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► FLORIDA KEYS

Sanctuary Approved

Throughout this century, the Florida Keys have survived hurricanes, ship groundings and hordes of Jimmy Buffett wanna-bes. Now add to the list the six-year struggle to implement the 2,800-square-nautical-mile Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

In January, after heavy lobbying by 20 environmental groups, Florida Governor Lawton Chiles gave the state's approval to the FKNMS management plan (see "Seaviews: In the Zone," *RSD*, Jan./Feb. '97). Designed to protect the

world's most popular coral reefs, used by 1.6 million divers, fishermen and boaters annually, the management plan goes into effect July 1.

Provisions of the plan include establishing "no take" areas, studying water quality problems and preventing ship groundings by designating areas to be avoided by large ships. It was three successive groundings of large ships in 1989 that prompted Congress to create the sanctuary in the first place and, ironically, less than a week after Chiles approved the plan, a 600-foot Mexican con-

—BOB FRIEL



THE MEXICAN CONTAINER SHIP
IGLOO MOON ON THE REEF OFF
SUGARLOAF KEY.

tainer ship rammed into the reef south of Sugarloaf Key.

PHOTO CONTEST GOING FOR THE GOLD

Golf, tennis, even stock car racing, all have their pro-am events. Now, so does underwater photography.

The first World Open Underwater Photographic Competition starts in May and runs through October in the Turks & Caicos

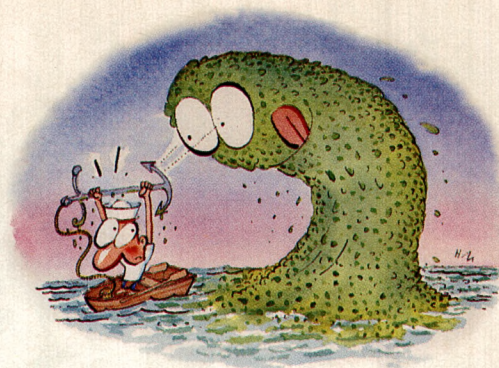
Islands. Open to both professionals and amateurs in separate categories, the event is billed as "the Olympics of Underwater Photography."

Photographers may compete as individuals or teams and can use any camera, film or dive gear they choose, although all entries must be shot in the Turks & Caicos Islands during the competition period.

The eight winning photographs will be issued by the Turks & Caicos as a set of commemorative postage

stamps bearing the name and home country of the winning photographers. The 12 honorable mentions will be published as a calendar. Winners will split \$10,000 in cash prizes and additional prizes of up to \$50,000 in dive travel, equipment and training. Got your attention now?

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HAL MAYFORTH

► OCEAN LIFE

Pumping Iron

Has your corner of the ocean been looking a little anemic lately? If so, it could be a simple iron deficiency.

Recently published results from a 1995 experiment, conducted 800 miles west of the Galapagos Islands, showed that when 900 pounds of iron were dumped into this biologically barren area of the equatorial Pacific, an incredible two million pounds of phytoplankton "bloomed" within a week.

As the photosynthesizing organisms grew in number, the carbon dioxide level in the surrounding water dropped 20 percent. The test, financed by the National Science Foundation, may explain why equatorial and subarctic Pacific regions, rich in primary plant nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, are so low in phytoplankton. Secondly, since phytoplankton consume climate-warming carbon dioxide (converting it to sugar for use by the rest of the ocean food chain), changes in iron levels of these nutrient-rich, plankton-poor oceans, which account for 20 percent of the ocean's surface, may play an important role in regulating Earth's climate.

That's where the controversy begins. Some see iron seeding as a first step in a new era of "ecoengineering" in which humans stave off global warming and boost fish production for an increasingly hungry population. "We now have a way, in case it's ever needed, to increase the productivity of the oceans and reduce carbon dioxide to cope with global warming at a relatively low cost," says Dr. Adam Heller, a chemical engineer at the University of Texas at Austin, who has promoted the idea in Washington.

Other scientists see pumping the millions of tons of iron required to reduce even a small percentage of the carbon dioxide humans generate each day from burning fossil fuels as technologically impractical—and environmentally risky.

"The plant and animal composition of inter-related marine ecosystems has evolved over many thousands of years and exists in a relatively stable state," says Don Rice, director of NSF's chemical oceanography program. "Even if we could significantly counteract atmospheric carbon dioxide using iron, why would we want to risk destroying the community structure of the world's oceans?" And besides, diving through an ocean-sized plankton slick doesn't sound all that appealing. —LANCE LEONHARDT

The Weight-Belt Brawl

by Jon Hardy



Ed.'s note: This regular column presents the anatomy of a scuba diving accident and the lessons to be learned from it. The incidents described are real. Names of locations and people have been changed or deleted.

Setting the Stage

It's a beautiful day to dive near the off-shore rock pile. A large dive boat is swinging on one anchor as the divers enter the water. One diver surfaces and reports to the divemaster that her new weight belt has come off and fallen to the bottom. He asks her to sit out the dive until he can recover the belt.

The Dive

Meanwhile, two other divers enter the water from a nearby inflatable boat and swim through the area. They discover the weight belt and one of them picks it up, inflating his BC to compensate for the extra 20 pounds. As the two divers are returning to their boat, they encounter the divemaster. At this point, all three are swimming along a very steep underwater slope.

Round 1: Tug of War

Using hand signals, the divemaster—who has no air in his BC—attempts to claim the weight belt from one of the divers, who has fully inflated his BC. Versions of the story vary, but the confusion of trying to communicate escalates into a fight which actually comes to blows.

As the divemaster and the diver strug-

gle for the belt, the diver with the fully inflated BC lets go. Suddenly overweighted, the divemaster plunges down the slope, while the other diver rockets toward the surface. Both manage to regain control and return to their respective boats.

Round 2: War of Words

The divers in the inflatable pull anchor and motor over to the larger dive boat. Accusations fly concerning who owns the belt and who put whom at risk. The shouting match gets nowhere and is finally broken off.

Round 3: See You in Court

The diver carrying the weight belt sues the divemaster for allegedly causing an ear injury due to his uncontrolled ascent. After extensive legal haggling, the suit goes before a judge for binding arbitration. A physician specializing in diving medicine establishes that the diver does have an ear injury. However, expert testimony on behalf of the divemaster reveals that equalizing pressure is an individual diver's responsibility, and that ear injuries are far more likely on descent than on ascent. The judge finds in favor of the divemaster and no award is made to the diver.

ANALYSIS

Although it appears to be little more than a playground squabble, this case involved a costly legal battle. It's important to remember that the accident could have resulted in a life-threatening air embolism. The entire scene could have been avoided if the divemaster and the diver had followed these simple lessons.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

- Accepted etiquette in the recreational diving community is to return recovered dive gear to its owner if possible.
- If underwater communication becomes impossible, go to the surface, sort out the situation and then proceed.
- Every diver should be well trained, experienced and practiced in maintaining buoyancy control under both normal and emergency conditions. One of the first rules of buoyancy control: never use your BC as a lift bag.
- Never let minor concerns over equipment become more important than the safety of divers under water.
- Communicate and relate to other divers in a courteous manner.

► RESEARCH

Robots of the Sea

LEO is a near-perfect oceanographer. He works round the clock, never complains about all that gritty sand, and has never gotten seasick—not even once.

Rather than being the envy of his colleagues at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute and Rutgers University, LEO is a hero. For decades, oceanographers have longed for a continuous set of eyes and ears on the ocean floor and with the Long Term Ecosystem Observatory, or LEO-15, they got their wish.

Located five miles off the New Jersey coast in 50 feet of water, LEO-15's two trunk-shaped nodes (10 feet long, 10 feet wide, five feet tall) are satellites of the sea. Each is crammed with sensors to monitor water temperature, salinity, oxygen content, wave

height, tidal range, currents, nutrient levels, sand migration and water clarity. The nodes are also equipped with video cameras and advanced imaging systems to record sea life. The feast of data is beamed to shore in real-time via cable where human oceanographers and web surfers can pore over it at their dry leisure.

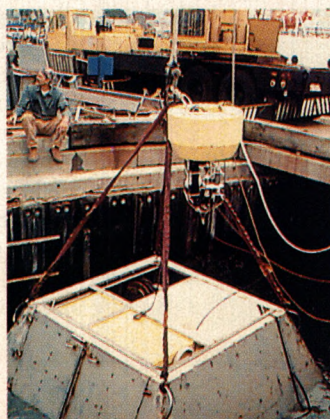
"What you end up with is a pretty good, three-dimensional view of the surrounding ocean," says Christopher von Alt, a senior Woods Hole engineer. "Until now, divers had to go out periodically to collect the data. Now we can do whatever we want, whenever we want

to, right from the lab, regardless of sea conditions."

The next step: expand LEO's surveying capability with autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs)—unmanned, untethered subs with their own propulsion and navigation systems. The AUVs, scheduled to be installed this summer, will leave the nodes at programmed intervals to take water samples before returning to download data and recharge their batteries.

LEO still has a few kinks to work out, however. The biggest problem? "Sand," says von Alt. "It works its way into places you never expected it to."

—BY JERRY SHINE



Linking to LEO

A sampling of LEO-15's processed data can be found on the web at <http://marine.rutgers.edu>.

► READER POLL RESULTS

Solo Diving

All you rugged individualists, take heart: You aren't alone. When we asked RSD readers if they thought it was safe to dive solo, 47 percent of you said yes, 37 percent said no, and 16 percent responded with a definite maybe. Readers in this third category tended to think solo diving was safe in certain conditions—i.e., proper training and experience, with redundant gear, to shallow depths, on familiar reefs, when there was a topside tender, etc.

The number one reason you gave for diving alone? Avoiding bad buddies who use the buddy system as a crutch and don't take responsibility for themselves. The number one reason for staying together? Safety and the chance to share experiences.

Here is a sampling of your comments:

YES

► *Most of my diving is solo. It's perfectly safe if done properly. Of all the close calls I've ever had, most were created by my so-called buddy.*

► *You've never experienced an acute-awareness dive until you've dived alone. Solo diving makes you more self-reliant and builds confidence in your own abilities.*

► *First and foremost, you are your best buddy. You are the only one who can make sure you are properly prepared for diving.*

NO

► *Never go without a buddy. Dive alone, die alone.*

► *As a divemaster, I think diving alone is arrogant and uninformed. You cannot control everything under water. I'm sorry,*

you need a buddy.

► *Diving is like sex: It's better to share the experience than to solo.*

MAYBE

► *The question of diving alone can only be answered by the individual. If diving alone is out of a passion to dive, it is safe. But if it is to boast, be macho or boost one's ego, it is dangerous.*

► *As far as I'm concerned, it's safer to dive alone than with a new diver who has very limited skills or with an experienced diver who has no regard for safety. However, I prefer to dive with a competent buddy and share the adventure.*

Next Question

You sure were smug as you grabbed your two carry-on bags and breezed to your welcome cocktail while all the other divers were crowding a balky conveyor piled high with generic-looking gear bags, sorting out whose was whose.

Only now they're all happily gearing up with familiar equipment and you're

looking at a still-damp wetsuit, a weather-beaten BC, and a regulator that looks suspiciously like that sticky carburetor on your first car—after you totaled it.

Rental gear: Convenient? You bet. But does it perform well? You tell us.

For this month's reader poll, we want to know: Have you been satisfied with the performance of rental scuba gear you've used?

Buying and maintaining rental

Question

Overall, have you been satisfied with the performance of rental scuba gear?

Dial (800) DIVE-LINE and follow the recorded instructions to vote. Or send e-mail to RSDmgzn@aol.com. You can also participate at either our web site (<http://www.scubadiving.com>); America Online area (keyword: RSD); or by writing to: Reader Poll, 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405.



► BENEFIT CONCERT

Big Time with Little Texas

Who says saving reefs is all work and no fun? Not the members of the country band Little Texas.

On May 30, the platinum-selling band will kick off the Seaspaces Dive Show with a live acoustic concert to benefit the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. The show at the Hyatt Regency Houston will feature live music and underwater video from the sanctuary where three of the band's five members recently participated in a reef survey project.

Concert proceeds will benefit three nonprofit organizations that work to promote and protect the Flower Garden Banks: Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF), the Seaspaces scholarship fund, and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation.

The Flower Garden Banks NMS, located 110 miles south of Freeport, Texas, celebrates its fifth anniversary as a sanctuary in 1997, which is also the 25th anniversary of the National Marine Sanctuary Programs.

The concert starts at 8 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Houston. Tickets are \$20. To order, or for more information, call the Seaspaces Info Line at (713) 467-6675.

gear is one of the biggest costs dive operators face. They try to coax the longest possible life out of rental gear without sacrificing comfort and safety, only to see it abused by customers who mistake the word "rental" for "disposable." Appearances aside, tell us how well the industry is doing at maintaining the rental gear we use for life support.

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Ask RSD

Q and A

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► By **BUCK BUTLER**

The Long and Short of It

Q: I recently read a newspaper article about the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The story mentioned that the Florida Keys are home to "the second-longest coral reef in the world." Is this true? It seems that I've heard this claim made for other reefs. Which are the biggest reefs in the world?

K.E., DEER PARK, N.Y.

A: That question isn't as simple as it sounds. How do you define a reef? Are you talking only about barrier reefs? How continuous does a reef have to be in order to qualify?

"There are a number of places in the world where it is very difficult to suggest where one reef ends and the next begins," says reef expert Mark Spalding of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, England. "In the Red Sea, for example, fringe reefs extend for hundreds of kilometers along both coasts and, while there are short breaks in this system, it becomes a problem of definition as to whether we actually call these different reefs." The same holds true for the reef that is universally considered the longest in the world: Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Take a look at a map of the east coast of Australia, and you'll see that the GBR is actually a complex reef system made up of hundreds of individual reefs.

Then there's the question of different kinds of reef formations. The Great Barrier and the Florida Keys reef are both barrier reefs, protecting coastlines with a relatively straight line of coral formations. But what about the reefs that form a circle around many of the atolls in the Pacific and Indian oceans? If some of them were laid out end-to-end, they would place near the top of the list for world's longest reefs.

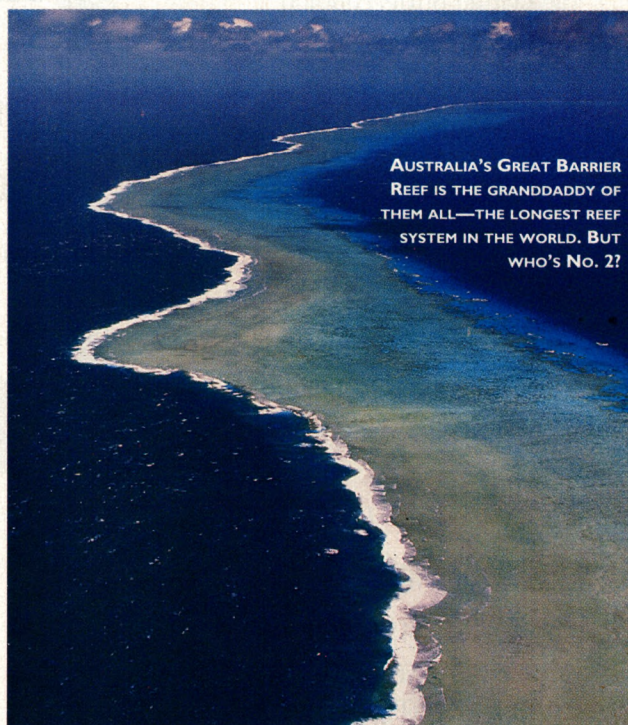
If we agree that the Great Barrier Reef is the world's longest, and we discount circular atoll reefs and the fringe reefs of the Red Sea, the Florida reef tract can still place no better than third in the world. The Belize barrier reef stretches the entire length of the coastline of that country and claims the title of longest reef in the Western Hemisphere.

How to Beat Panic

Q: When I'm diving, I sometimes suffer minor attacks of panic under water. I love diving and don't want to give it up, but when I panic, I feel out of control and I know that it's dangerous. Is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening?

D.D., NEW ORLEANS, LA.

A: You're not alone. In a 1995 study from the Sport Psychology Lab at the University of Wisconsin, more than half of experienced divers surveyed said they had experienced panic or near-panic while diving. These include cases with identifiable sources of stress such as equipment failure and



AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF IS THE GRANDDADDY OF THEM ALL—THE LONGEST REEF SYSTEM IN THE WORLD. BUT WHO'S NO. 2?

PAUL CHESLEY / TONY STONE IMAGES

entanglement, and unexplained cases of panic related to individual divers' anxiety levels.

There are some situations that would cause nearly any diver to panic—coming face-to-face with a great white shark, for example. But there are ways to minimize the risk of ending up in a situation that might result in a panicked response:

► **Don't dive beyond your capabilities.** Make sure that you're experienced enough for the dive you're planning. A buddy's training does not replace the need for your own.

► **Avoid getting into a situation that you're not equipped to handle.** Don't try to squeeze in that last dive at dusk, unless you're prepared to finish it as a night dive. And if you don't have the proper equipment to make a certain dive, such as a wreck penetration, don't try to fudge it and make do with what you've got. It's better to pass on the dive and make it another day.

► **Stay current with your training.** When was the last time that you practiced buddy breathing? How

about a ditch and don't? Cleared a flooded mask recently? For too many of us, the answer is when we got certified, which may have been years ago. It's important to stay current with skills, and to practice skills that are appropriate to the type of diving you're doing.

Don't dive if it doesn't feel right. You may be eminently qualified to make the dive you've planned. You may have done it 20 times before, but if something doesn't feel right when it's time to get into the water, don't. Don't let your ego get in the way of safety. Pass on the dive, and make sure you're around to do it another day.

Cold Comfort

Q: Do I really need a regulator specifically made for cold-water diving to dive in cold water? If so, how cold is cold?

S.B., BURLINGTON, N.C.

A: Water colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit is generally considered "cold water" for diving purposes, though some more conservative experts cite 45F as the cutoff. When you use a standard recreational regulator in cold water, you run the risk of the regulator "freezing up" on you. Not good.

Fortunately, regulator manufacturers have found ways to modify regulator designs for diving in extreme temperatures. Anytime you dive in water that is 40F or colder, you should use a cold-water regulator.

The first stage of a cold-water regulator is "environmentally sealed" to provide a buffer between the cold water and the regulator's working parts. The second stage is essentially detuned to reduce the velocity of air passing through the regulator. (The faster air moves, the colder it gets.) Most standard regulators can be modified for use in cold water.

Another factor that can affect regulator performance in cold water can't be controlled by the regulator: the moisture content of the air in your tank. Compressed air is usually extremely dry anyway, but dive stores in cold-water areas take extra precautions in filtering the air to ensure that as little moisture as possible finds its way into your tank.

Fathom This

Q: In measuring water depth, the term "fathom" is usually used. Am I correct that a fathom represents six feet of depth? What depth is represented by a bar?

T.W., CLEARWATER, FLA.

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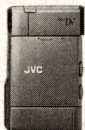
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A: The word "fathom" comes from the Old English word meaning "outstretched," because a fathom was said to be the fingertip-to-fingertip length of one's outstretched arms. The arms, in this case, must have belonged to a good-sized man because the term eventually came to represent a distance of six feet. As a measurement of depth, fathoms have largely been replaced by meters and, in the dive world at least, feet.

A bar, on the other hand, is not a measure of depth but a metric unit of pressure, approximately equal to one atmosphere. Atmospheric pressure can change depending on altitude and atmospheric conditions, but averages about 14.7 psi. A standard bar equals 14.5 psi.

You can think of bars in terms of depth because pressure in seawater increases by one bar approximately every 10 meters, or 33 feet. So at 66 feet, you'll

find yourself at three atmospheres or three bars of pressure. While U.S.-made pressure gauges measure tank pressure in increments of psi, gauges in the metric world—everywhere but the U.S.—use bars.

Clarification

The answer to the question about oxygen toxicity in the Q&A column in the March '97 issue should have made it clear that the calculations were for a diver breathing compressed air, not pure oxygen. Thanks to the many readers who wrote and called with comments about this question.

Send your questions and tips to:
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St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405; e-
mail them to RSDmgzn@aol.com.
Although we're not able to respond to
every reader, if we use your tip we'll
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Tip Talk

Keeping Trim

Having trouble staying horizontal while swimming under water? If your fins and butt tend to drop, and you're not overweighted, the problem may still be around your waist. Wearing all your lead at your waist or just below can make staying horizontal more difficult. Use an old tank strap or weight belt to mount a weight at the top of your tank, just above your BC's strap. You should find it easier to stay level. Caution: Don't use more than a few pounds since this weight is not ditchable.



REBECCA PETREA, JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FLA.

Take a Deep Breath

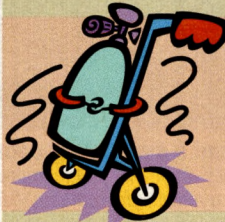
Just before entering the water, take a few fast, deep breaths off your regulator. Here's why: If the pressure gauge hand moves at all, you probably don't have your tank valve fully open. If your regulator hesitates or is restricted in any way, it's not working at maximum capacity. If there is a bad taste to the air, you may have tank contamination. Remember that carbon monoxide is odorless and tasteless and will not show up with this test.

ARTHUR F. GRAF, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Dive In-Really

The best entry is the most appropriate one for the dive you're doing. Training usually focuses on the giant stride, backward roll and seated entries. But a forward roll puts you in the water in a head-first, swim-down attitude. It's performed with gear tucked and BC deflated. You can either roll slightly and land on your shoulders, letting them absorb the impact, or you can hold your mask with one hand and break the water with the other in a classic head-first dive. When done no more than three feet above the water, this entry is good for current dives, pitching seas and the Jersey Shore, when you don't want to linger on the surface.

JOHN BOND, DANIA, FLA.



Save Your Back

Lugging scuba cylinders can be a pain, not to mention tiring—and fatigued isn't a good way to begin a dive. I've found that an old golf bag cart works really well as a tank cart, especially in sand and rough terrain, for which they're designed. I have an old golf bag cart that a relative gave me. Its well-used look means I don't have to worry too much about it being stolen, either.

KEN FAGERMAN, ELKHART, IND.

Jelly Be Gone

At night, dive lights attract various creatures of the sea. Some of them, especially jellyfish, can sting you. When ascending at night, use your light to check above you to see if jellyfish, especially the highly toxic sea wasps, are in your path. An easy way to clear a path is a blast from your octopus.

Aetobatus@aol.com

gear bag

Coats to keep you warm, a tote to save your back and gloves to help you get a grip. ► by **JOHN FRANCIS**

Four Scuba Parkas

More than a raincoat, more than a windbreaker, a scuba parka should keep you warm even when it's wet, and should dry quickly. Asking too much? We put four top parkas to the test—and pick the best.

WARM WIND'S WATERSPORTS PARKA

HIT► Adjustable velcro cuffs, big hood, comfortable slash pockets, zipper flap inside. **MISS**► Not double-stitched. **SHELL**► Nylon, urethane-coated. **LINER**► Polartec 100 polyester fleece. **WEIGHT**► 30 oz. **PRICE**► \$160. **CONTACT**► WARM WIND, (800) 288-9276.

Well-Built: ★★★★★

Warm: ★★★

Shrink Resistant: ★★★

Waterproof: ★★★★★

Fast Drying: ★★★★★

Easy to Pack: ★★★



EDITOR'S PICK

WARM WIND'S WATERSPORTS PARKA. Best overall design, it's also warm enough, dry enough, comfortable, packable and priced right.

A middleweight parka, the Watersports Parka has the best overall design of the four parkas reviewed here. Cuffs are made snug with a hook-and-loop tab that is more comfortable than elastic. And the wind flap for the zipper is inside; on the outside, the wind would blow it open. The Polartec 100 lining is the thinnest of the four, but unlike the others it is chemically treated to wick water from its surface better. To find out how quickly the parkas would air-dry on a dive boat, I soaked all of them in a bucket and hung them in the shade. The Watersports Parka was driest after an hour and is the only one I would have then put on over dry clothes. (Though, to be fair, you wouldn't normally expect to get your parka soaked. When made merely damp by a wet exposure suit, they all dried sufficiently in an hour.) The thinner lining also shrank less in a clothes dryer.

TRUWEST'S POLAR PARKA DST1

HIT► Triple stitching, good pockets, neoprene-coated shell. **MISS**► Elastic cuffs, small hood. **SHELL**► Nylon, neoprene-coated. **LINER**► "Truarctic Polarfleece" polyester fleece. **WEIGHT**► 43 oz. **PRICE**► \$175. **CONTACT**► TRUWEST, (800) 322-3669.

Well-Built: ★★★★★

Warm: ★★★★★

Shrink Resistant: ★★

Waterproof: ★★★★★

Fast Drying: ★★★

Easy to Pack: ★★★



The TruWest parka has more of almost everything, including apparently 2,250 size and color combinations. The "Truarctic Polarfleece" lining, actually Polartec 300, the company says, is heavy and warm, and the neoprene-coated shell is supposed to be more waterproof than the next guy's. But more may not be better. This parka feels bulky, it is slow to air-dry and the lining shrinks in the clothes dryer. And if it's theoretically more waterproof, I doubt that it matters in real life. To test the claim, I spread each of the four parkas over a bucket, made a hollow with my fist and poured a quart of water into it. After holding solid water for 10 minutes, none of the parkas were even damp on the inside. Some of the design details of the TruWest are not well thought out. The hood is small for a big-headed diver wearing an exposure suit hood, and the elastic cuffs

RATING SYSTEM

★ = poor

★★★★★ = outstanding

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE ESSIG

are a bit uncomfortable on the wrists. On the other hand, the construction quality is excellent, with many triple-stitched seams and bar-tacked stress points.

PADI SPORTSWEAR'S TECH PARKA



HIT► Lightweight, soft feel, easy to pack, "storm flap" over zipper. **MISS**► Pockets too low and unlined, hood too small. **SHELL**► Supplex nylon. **LINER**► Polartec 200 polyester fleece. **WEIGHT**► 27 oz. **PRICE**► \$199. **CONTACT**► PADI SPORTSWEAR, (954) 782-8088.

Well-Built: ★★
Waterproof: ★★★
Warm: ★★★
Fast Drying: ★★★
Shrink Resistant: ★★
Easy to Pack: ★★★★★

This one packs the smallest by far because the shell is soft and because there's just less material in the short anorak style. However, while the drawstring waist is a good idea, the waist

The Incredible Shrinking Parkas

You'll want to wash any parka from time to time to get the salt out of it. Washing instructions say you can "tumble dry low, remove immediately," and manu-

facturers say the lining won't shrink in the dryer, but it does. We recommend you air-dry them only, even though it may take days.

and therefore the pockets are too low for comfort. The pockets are unlined. The hook-and-loop tabs on the wind flap over the zipper keep it closed, but make it awkward to unzip the coat. Pocket zippers—there are four of them—are a mixed blessing since zippers are normally the first part of a parka to fail. (Use silicone spray to keep them from seizing.)

OCEAN EXTREME PARKA

HIT► Heavy shell, high-quality construction, inside pocket. **MISS**► Bulky, high shrinkage in dryer. **SHELL**► Ultrex laminated nylon. **LINER**► Polartec 200 polyester fleece. **WEIGHT**► 51 oz. **PRICE**► \$188. **CONTACT**► OCEAN EXTREME, (510) 273-9634.

Well-Built: ★★★★★
Waterproof: ★★★★★
Warm: ★★★★★
Fast Drying: ★
Shrink Resistant: ★
Easy to Pack: ★

This is the one to take to the Arctic. The Polartec 200 lining is double-sided, the maker says, making it the thickest of the four. It felt the warmest. The heavy-duty shell is double-layered over the shoulders, and the Ultrex coating is said to be even more waterproof than neoprene—if that's possible, let alone necessary. But if

the Ocean Extreme does get wet inside, it is slow to dry. After a full soaking, and a two-hour hang in the shade, it still held more than a pint of water, most of it in the hem, cuffs and pockets. Even with repeated wringing, those areas were still damp after a full day. On the other hand, the thick lining shrank most in the clothes dryer. And forget about packing this parka: it will need its own suitcase. Nice details include an inside pocket with hook-and-loop closure. More question-



able is the cuff closure—comfortable elastic inside the lining at forearm height so the sleeve will fall smoothly over gloves. If you don't wear gloves, however, your wrists will feel cold.

CoolNewStuff

STAND-OFF D-RING

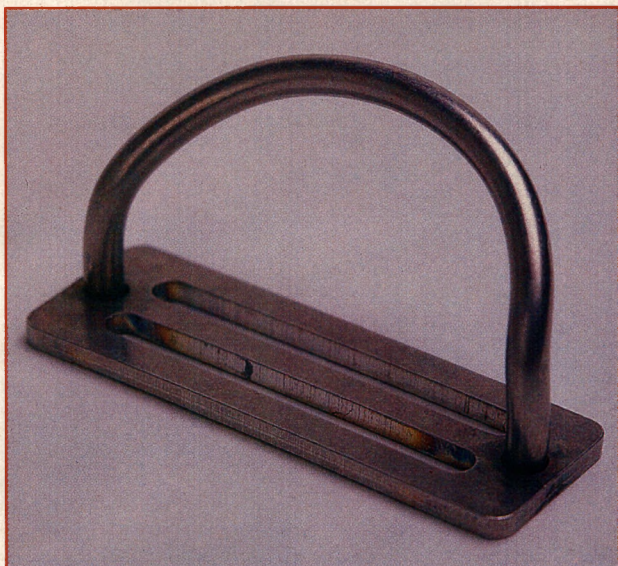
HIT► Clean finish, welded rings, compact shape. **MISS**► See price. **MATERIAL**► Stainless steel. **PRICE**► \$19.95. **CONTACT**► REEF SCUBA ACCESSORIES, (516) 766-7333.

The increasing number of accessories we're asked to take into the water requires us to find more and better attachment points. Tech diving has one helpful idea in the stand-off D-ring: you can clip something to it using only one hand. This one has a low-profile 45-degree ring (a standard 90-degree is also available) that is

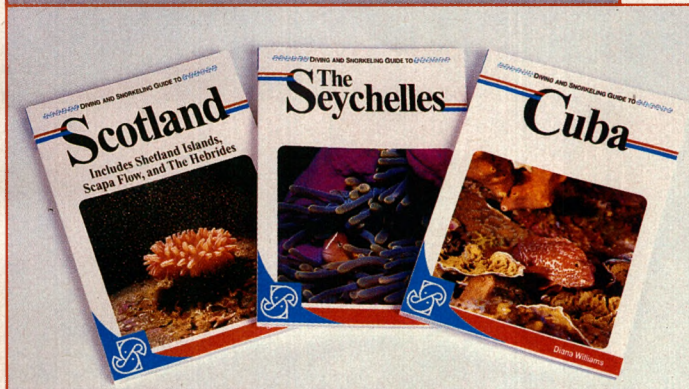
welded to the base. The base has closely spaced web slots, so it's less likely than others we've seen to slip on a vertical belt (a BC strap, for example).

TANK TOTE

HIT► Heavy-duty construction, nonskid tank pads, comfortable handle. **MISS**► It's hard to get straps really tight. **SPECS**► 1050 denier nylon, nylon side buckles, velcro closures, stainless steel D-rings. **PRICE**► \$36, plus \$26 for Premium shoulder strap. **CONTACT**► THERMOSTATIC INDUSTRIES, INC. (800) 345-4217.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
THE STAND-OFF D-RING;
DEEP SEE'S CURVED-FINGER
GLOVES; THE TANK TOTE;
AND THREE NEW DIVE
GUIDES FROM GULF
PUBLISHING.



There are other gadgets to make a tank easier to carry, but they have to be taken off and stowed somewhere when you get to the dive site. The Tank Tote, however, stays on the tank while you dive. It has rubber-like nonskid pads inside so it won't slip on the tank; its nylon outside gives a good grip to a BC mounted over it. A detachable shoulder strap allows no-hands carrying of tank or tank plus BC. Minor nitpick: I'd prefer cam-action-type buckles to lever the mounting tighter, but even when fastened intentionally loosely, the Tank Tote grips the cylinder pretty tenaciously.

DEEP SEE CURVED-FINGER GLOVES

HIT► Good dexterity, comfortable fit. **MISS**► Wrist strap hard to close one-handed. **SPECS**► 3 mm neoprene, glued and blind stitched, velcro closure. **PRICE**► \$25.99. **CONTACT**► DEEP SEE, (800) 367-2626.

Fingers with a natural curve make a glove more comfortable, and because you're not fighting the rubber as much to close your fist, they give you a better grip, too. There are other curved gloves on the market, but this new medium-weight design carries the anatomic idea a step further by adding seams over the knuckles. Effectively, each finger segment is a separate piece, individually sized and shaped. The net result is fingers that feel snug but not tight. Seam stitches, on the inside only, keep the glove's fingers thin and allow better dexterity than in other 3 mm gloves I've seen. (You can barely feel the seams.) A 5 mm version is also avail-

able. A protective, nonskid palm coating also adds to grip. The hook-and-loop wrist closure has a short tab that's hard to pull tight with one hand, however.

PISCES DIVING AND SNORKELING GUIDES (SCOTLAND, CUBA, THE SEYCHELLES)

HIT► Overview of dive sites as well as tourist facilities, good photos. **MISS**► Superficial treatment, uncritical attitude. **SPECS**► Softcover, 92 pages, color photos. **PRICE**► \$14.95 each. **CONTACT**► GULF PUBLISHING CO., (713) 529-4301.

These new additions to the 36-book Pisces Guide series cover three exotic dive locations: frigid Scotland, prohibited Cuba and the remote Seychelles. Has Pisces reached the end of the line? All follow the familiar Pisces format: A general introduction to tourism in the country is followed by short descriptions of dive sites with sketch maps. Appendices list local dive operators and other services. The guide to Scotland includes Scapa Flow (the grave of the WWI German High Seas Fleet), the Shetlands and the Hebrides. All the books resemble travel brochures in having too few facts and too many exuberant adjectives and pretty pictures. The guide to Cuba, in particular, fails to address the fact that the U.S. Government still says we can't go there. There are ways, however, and it would have been nice to hear about them. Still, if you're researching a trip to one of these unusual destinations, the Pisces Guides are valuable starting points.

EDITOR'S PICK

DEEP SEE'S CURVED-FINGER GLOVES, medium weight. Surprisingly comfortable. Just enough rubber. And, man—the grip!

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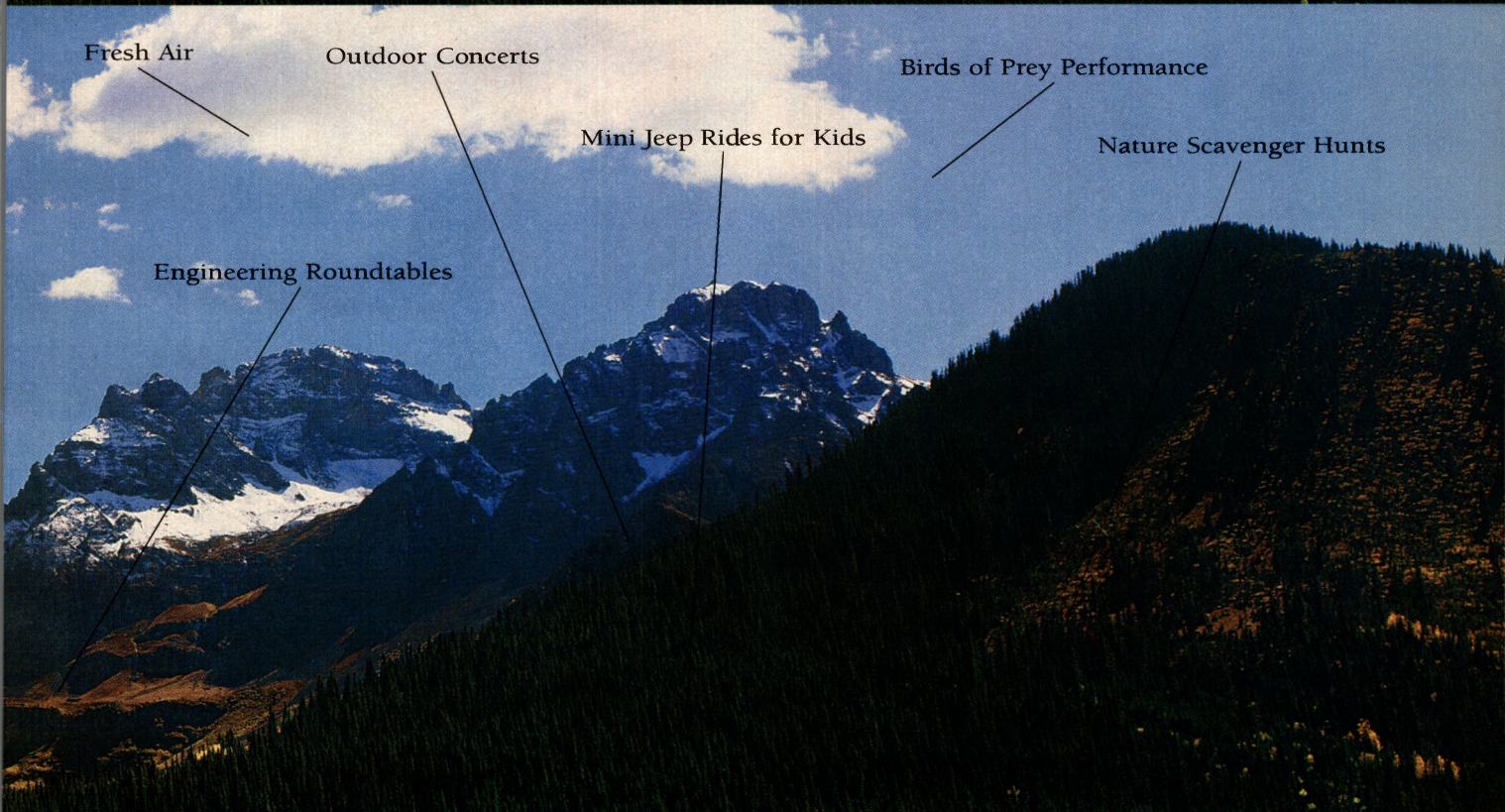
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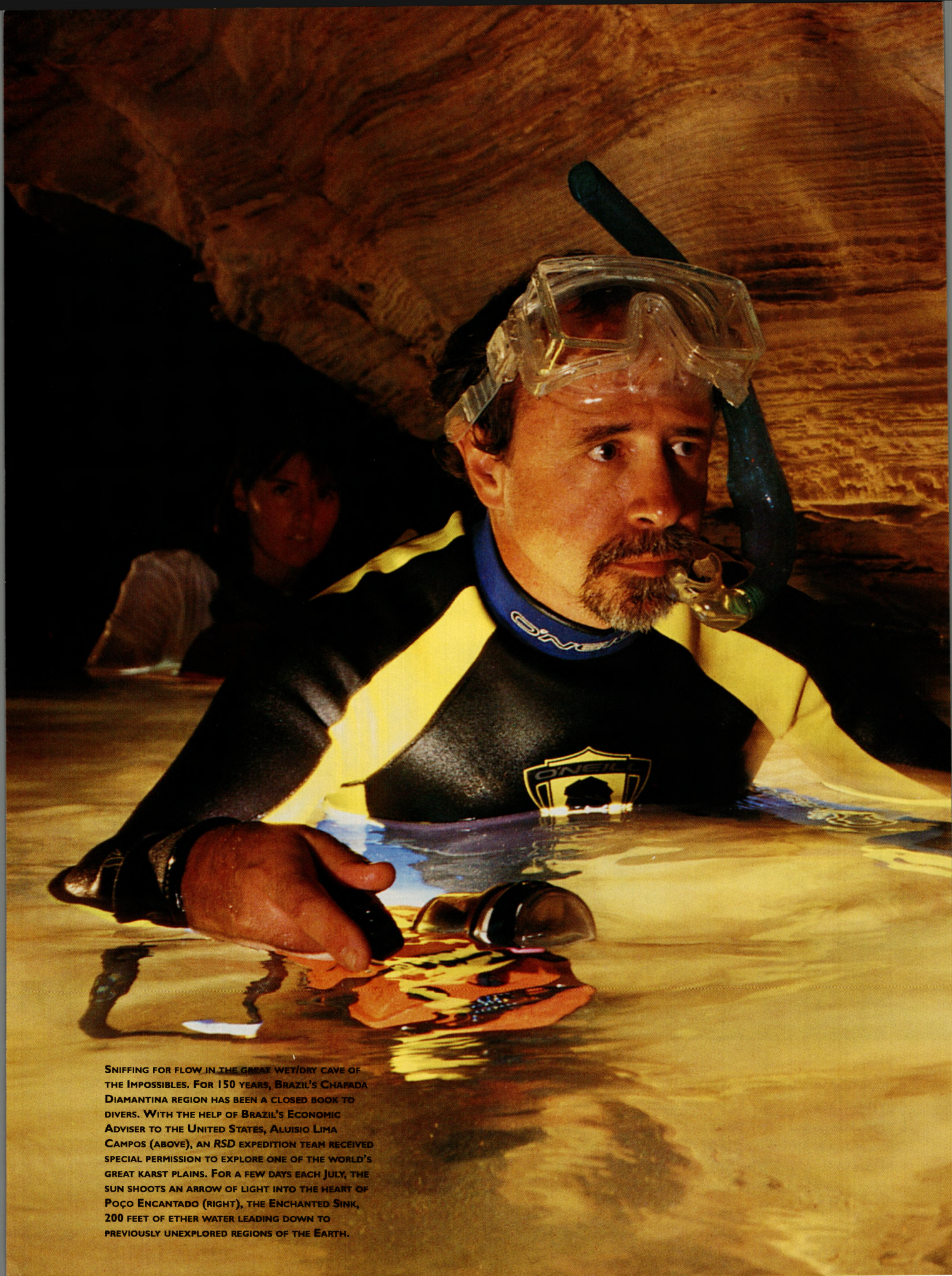


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T H E R E ' S O N L Y O N E



SNIFFING FOR FLOW IN THE GREAT WET/DRY CAVE OF THE IMPOSSIBLES. FOR 150 YEARS, BRAZIL'S CHAPADA DIAMANTINA REGION HAS BEEN A CLOSED BOOK TO DIVERS. WITH THE HELP OF BRAZIL'S ECONOMIC ADVISER TO THE UNITED STATES, ALUISIO LIMA CAMPOS (ABOVE), AN RSD EXPEDITION TEAM RECEIVED SPECIAL PERMISSION TO EXPLORE ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT KARST PLAINS. FOR A FEW DAYS EACH JULY, THE SUN SHOOTS AN ARROW OF LIGHT INTO THE HEART OF POÇO ENCANTADO (RIGHT), THE ENCHANTED SINK, 200 FEET OF ETHER WATER LEADING DOWN TO PREVIOUSLY UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF THE EARTH.

TREASURE OF

IN BRAZIL'S WILD WEST, THE CAVES ARE UNTAMED,

THE CHAPADA

UNEXPLORED — AND UNFORGIVING.



DIAMANTINA

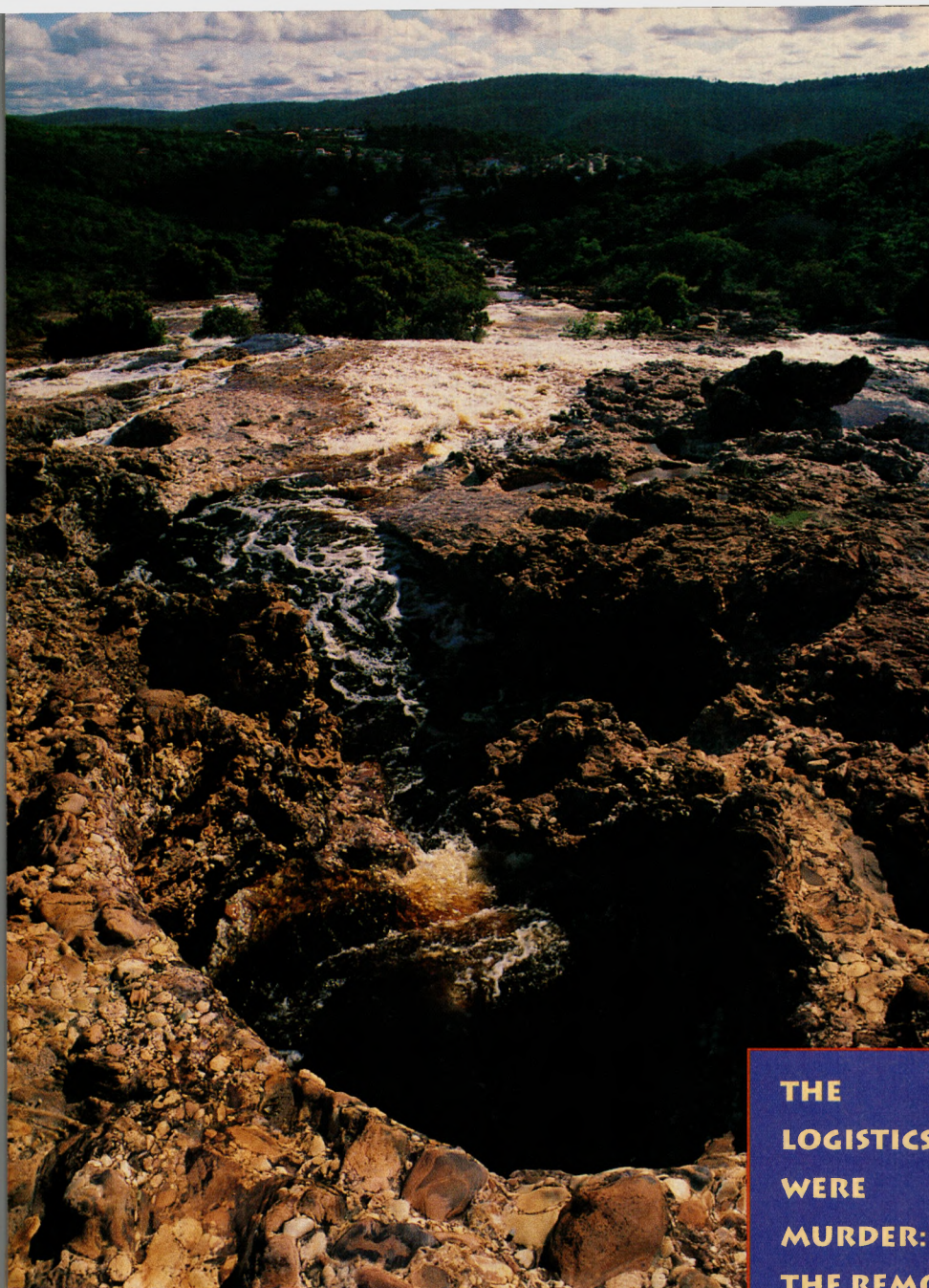
TEXT BY BUCKY MCMAHON PHOTOGRAPHY BY WES SKILES

Our guide Pablo Koss drops to his knees on the cave floor and begins to hammer at a rough-hewn wooden barricade with a shovel. Behind him, the rest of the *RSD* expeditionary team is strung out in a mule-train, tiny firefly figures illuminated by helmet lights and lanterns.

It's like the climax of a pirate yarn, when the buccaneer's spade bites into the wood of the treasure chest. Pablo's shovel catches under a board and he torques it with a flex of his stout left arm. The fingers of his blackened right hand are swollen and



COURTESY ARQUEM ALCANTARA/REXO



blistered like roasted wieners from a compressor accident that nearly killed him yesterday and would at least have hospitalized the average person. But there's no hospital in the remote Chapada region of Brazil's Bahia, and the bullish man has more strength in one good arm than any of us has in two.

Nails shriek, timber buckles and snaps. Revealed below: the twin posts of a massive ladder descending 30 feet to water. How anybody ever secured such an apparatus to a gap in stone is a mystery, but the ladder is on scale with the rest of this giant. More than 200 feet above us, like levitated boxcars, hang great cubic blocks of pre-Cambrian limestone.

Eons ago, pooling rainwater seeped into the nearly impervious gray stone of the Chapada Diamantina karst plateau, working its slow, corrosive magic until the rock above achieved critical mass. The resulting collapsed dome is one of the largest in the world. Then, sometime in the relatively more recent past (as evidenced by a pair of tremendous tree trunks at the bottom of the sink), a second collapse nearly sealed off the cavern. The jumbled pile of boulders from that event left open a single portal to the sky. For a few days each July, the sun shoots an arrow of

light into the heart of Poço Encantado, the Enchanted Sink.

But this is January, and the RSD team works in a weird, diffuse light. The water of the vast cistern glows, its core purest azure, bleeding to black at the edges. We can see clear through it to the bottom, some 200 feet below, down to the ghostly white boulders of the initial collapse.

Now, with light fast falling, Pablo has broken open a hole in the planks big enough for a diver. He steps aside, no doubt with some regret; he won't be diving today. Years ago, IBAMA, the Brazilian Environmental Institute, boarded up the pathway to the water, and so it has remained until this moment.

Getting permission to dive Poço Encantado has been a labor of love for Aluisio Lima Campos, Economic Adviser to the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, and an avid diver. Now Lima Campos arrives with our designated diver Mike Madden, renowned explorer of the Yucatán's Nohoch Nah Chich cave system. On another ledge across the water, Wes Skiles stands at the ready behind his tripod to document Madden's descent.

Madden clammers down the ladder; his tanks and gear follow by rope. Soon, outfitted in side-mount configuration, Madden kicks to the center of the pool. Strobes fire as Skiles paints the scene with

**THE
LOGISTICS
WERE
MURDER:
THE REMOTE
IMPOSSIBLES
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PIT WITH
VERTICAL
WALLS.**



light. "Remember me to whoever rides by!" Madden calls out. "Last words of Billy the Kid." Then he descends, the proverbial coin in the fountain, twinkling, dwindling. The black of his wet-suit, the steel of his cylinders remain brilliantly distinct, yet Madden has shrunk to tadpole size, angling toward the back wall of the sink. A few frog kicks more, and he disappears into stone.



To get to the Chapada Diamantina, the old diamond boom country, Brazil's own Wild West, we drove all day from the Bahian capital city, Salvador. That coastal dowager where Portuguese colonialism was born is dramatically hilly, lushly tropical, packed with crumbling baroque churches, and a cobbled street-life that sambas to a highly African beat. But once you strike inland you enter a spaghetti-Western landscape, a dusty red plain of cactus and thornbushes.

Bahia is nearly the size of Texas, and even more daunting to drive. Between bouts of "Row Row Row Your Boat" and "Ninety-Nine Bottles of Beer" we talked about caves—and cave fever. Our guide Pablo, Wes Skiles conjectured, his booming Southern twang ruffled by hot gusts from the *sertao*, had surely caught a bad case of it. Self-taught and underequipped, Pablo had nonetheless pioneered a number of Chapada caves.

"Caves do funny things to people," Skiles said. "You get possessive about 'your' caves." He felt that way sometimes about his North Florida caves (as Madden did in the Yucatán), lying anxiously awake at night, worrying that while you slept somebody else was at work underground, scooping your booty.

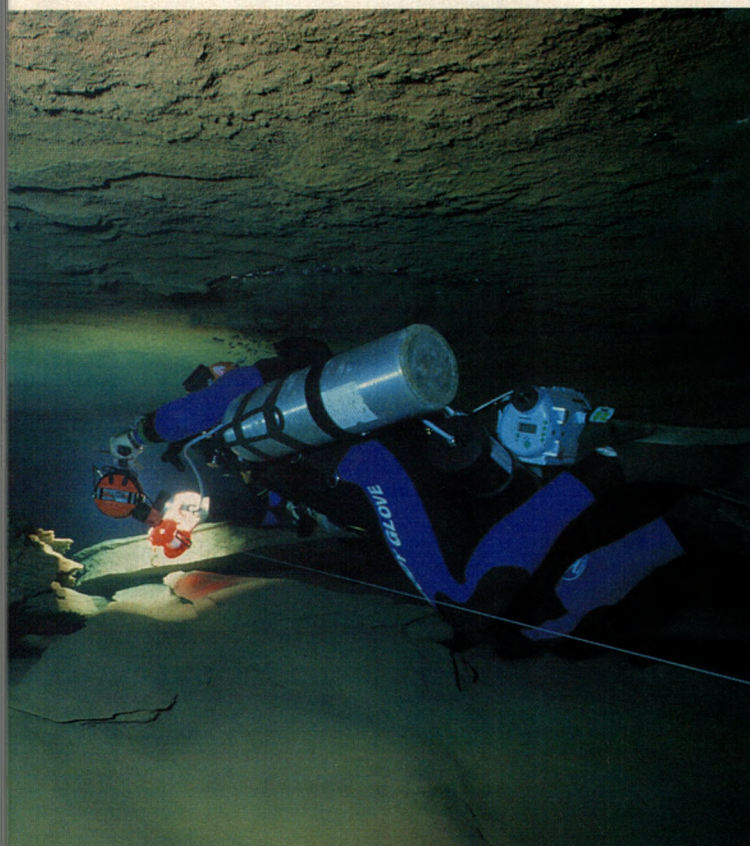
So what was Pablo thinking, bringing in a couple of gringos with decades of experience and all the right gear? Would they plunder and pillage? Burn line like banshees? Kick ass and take

(OPPOSITE PAGE)
ABOVE THE
MOUNTAIN-RESORT
TOWN OF LENÇÓIS,
THE PARAGUAÇU
RIVER FLOWS FROM
ONE OF THE REGION'S
MANY CAVES. (BELOW
CENTER) ALL THE
RULES ARE DIFFERENT
HERE: RENOWNED
YUCATÁN EXPLORER
MIKE MADDEN PUSHES
INTO VIRGIN CAVE AT
PRATINHA, PART OF A
TWIN CAVE SYSTEM.
(BELOW RIGHT) A
HUNDRED FEET BELOW
THE DIZZYING RIM OF
THE IMPOSSIBLES
AWAITS A SHADY EDEN
OF WILD BANANA AND
LEMON TREES, SEDGE
AND SUGARCANE.



names, as Madden put it? That was one X factor: the psyche of Pablo Koss, who was built like a bull and obviously fearless.

The other enormous X in this expedition was that, excepting Aluisio Lima Campos, none of us had ever even heard of the Chapada before the trip. The "Brazilian Grand Canyon" some called it. From the little I'd found to read, I knew it had been the fiefdom of cattle barons who defended their turf with mobile armies of mercenaries on horseback. With the dis-



covery of diamonds in the 1840s, the region boiled with strike-it-rich fever. All gems were claimed by the government, but smugglers risked life and limb (amputation was common punishment) to ferret out stones “smaller than a flea’s eye,” as Eduardo Galeano writes in *Memory of Fire*. Still, a torrent of wealth flowed out of the Chapada, the lion’s share ending up—oddly enough—in London, fueling the English Industrial Revolution (a fact ruefully noted in my tourist guide). Yeah, the Bahians had been robbed, all right, of just about everything. Outside the windows of the van we saw nothing but scrub to the far horizon, no edifice grander than a funky gas station; even passing another vehicle was an event.



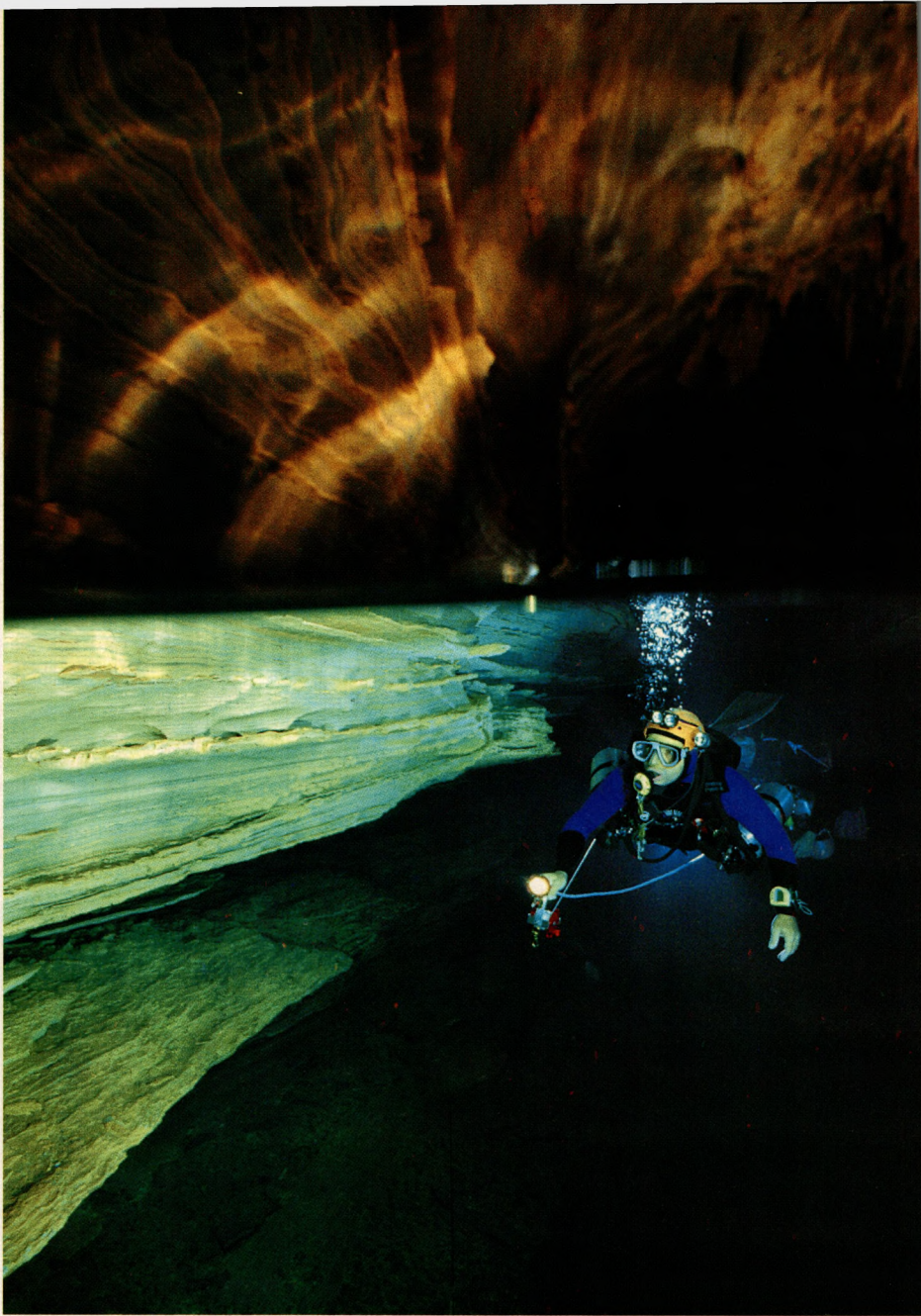
It was nearly sundown when at last the landscape began to change. We were steadily climbing onto a plateau, the air cooling and freshening as we ascended. At the boundary of the National Park we said: “Jesus! Jurassic Park!” But the sunstruck bluffs and towering tabletop mesas we saw are far older than that era. Our destination, the mountain-resort town of Lençóis, built by the falls of the Rio Santo Antonio, looked like the Town of Bedrock—stone houses, stone streets, an open-air market selling stone carvings and stone picture frames.

In the paneled bar of the Pousada de Lençóis, we were approached by a strapping figure in alpinist’s garb. Vigorous in the Teddy Roosevelt style, Luis Krug had hiked every meter of the Chapada’s trails in his 18 years as a “layman guide.” He had bronzed, monumental legs, piercing cerulean eyes, and a prominent nose that led him at once to our party. “You are intending to dive the Chapada?” he asked.

Aluisio Lima Campos took Krug in hand, sat him down at our table, ordered drinks of local juice and the clear cane liquor called *cachaça*. (“The best drink in all of Brazil! Absolutely, my friend.”) Soon Krug was spearing slabs of veal parmigiana from a communal plate and discoursing between bites on the beauty of the Chapada, and the mystery of its hydrogeology. Yes, years ago he had made the acquaintance of a French cave diver here; but the unfortunate fellow had been deported, his data seized. Who knew where it was now.

Because solemnity in the face of nature is redundant, an expedition’s basic coin is humor. Madden and Skiles, veterans of many expeditions together, have developed comic riffs to whistle in the dark, one of which is triggered by any mention of the French. Now they broke into paroxysms of Monty Pythonese: “Zee Holy Grail? Zounds verra nai-eeze, but we already have one of those!” Krug tolerated all of it benignly, borrowed a pen and paper and began sketching a map of a cave. Indeed, we did not have one of those.

Krug then toasted us all: “One hundred and 50 years of ille-

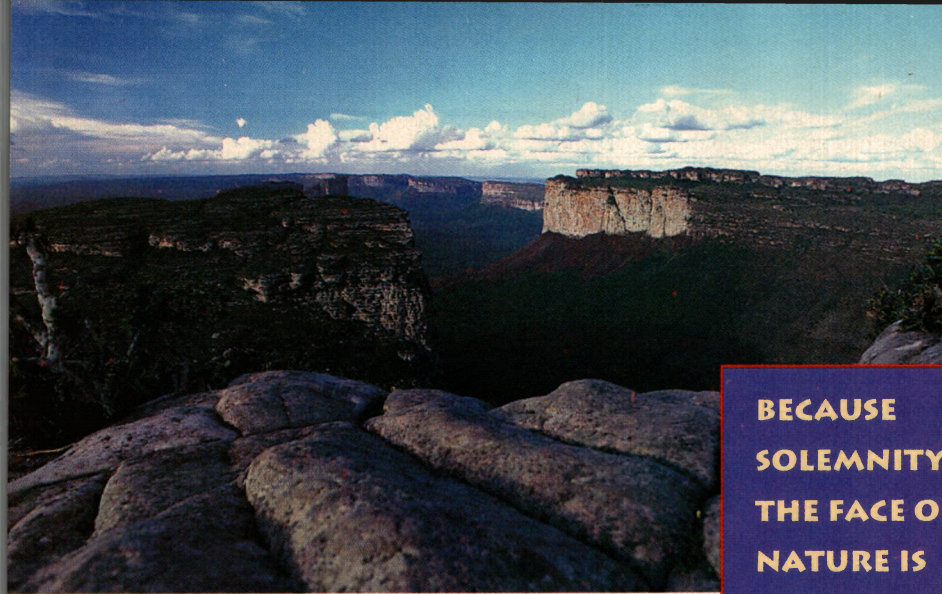


(ABOVE) A CAVE THAT COULD REACH UP AND BITE YOU: MIKE MADDEN BEGINS HIS DESCENT INTO THE IMPOSSIBLES. (OPPOSITE, TOP) THE CHAPADA NATIONAL PARK IS PART OF BRAZIL’S OWN WILD WEST, WITH OLD DIAMOND BOOM TOWNS AND A LANDSCAPE REMINISCENT OF AMERICA’S GRAND CANYON. (OPPOSITE, BELOW) THREE MEMBERS OF PROJECT CHAPADA DIAMANTINA—WES SKILES, BUCKY McMAHON, MIKE MADDEN (LEFT TO RIGHT)—LAID SOME LINE AND A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVING IN THE REGION.

gality have kept this place a secret. Too long the Chapada has been a closed book, and the diamonds were its beautiful cover. It’s time now to open that book and to begin to read it.”

Krug’s map was of a cave called *Impossíveis* (Impossibles). It showed two filigreed fingers, the left stubby, the right a booming 1,800 meters long. According to Krug, the entire passage could be hiked, waded and snorkeled. Where the tunnel seemed to dead-end, Skiles and Madden hoped to push it under water. Pablo had never dived there. The logistics were murder: the remote Impossibles lay at the bottom of a 100-foot pit with vertical walls.

First, though, the team cracked the book at Pratinha, an enormous farm of red dirt and spiky mamona plants and the location of one of the region’s most acces-



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sible caves and bathing spots. We drove north out of Lençóis, under the great gray dome of Pai Inácio, through the serpentine canyon-lands, and out onto the wide plateau.

Pratinha is watered by an underground spring that flows through twin caverns: Gruta Azul and the eponymous Pratinha cavern. The whole scene—a tethered mule, a Western-style cantina perched above a spooky stone tunnel—held the intimate charm of some lucky boy's Lionel train set. It was Sunday morning when our team's two vans drove up. We met the patriarch, the matriarch, daughters and sons-in-law, children and grandchildren; then we unloaded 13 cases of gear while our hosts brought out cold pitchers of delicious, exotic juices: *abacaxi*, *goiaba*, *umbú*.

Our dive plan called for Madden, Skiles and me to dive the brief traverse upstream through the Pratinha and out the Gruta, a path that would take us directly under the cantina. Madden and Skiles would then strike out upstream beyond Pablo's previous explorations into virgin cave. Meanwhile, the rest of the team—Pablo; Aluisio Lima Campos; and Andrea Nathan, a young writer from Brazil's dive magazine *Mergulho*—would beat the bush with one of the farm's hands (and Aluisio Cardoso of CRA, the State's equivalent of IBAMA), following up rumors of a third entrance to the spring.

In Pratinha, Skiles measured the spring's flow by tossing leaves and timing their movement with his watch. Some 40 yards in, the passage narrowed between stacks of dark, stratified limestone, ominous and unadorned by speleothegms, and then bulged out in an air-filled dome of concentric rings where bats whirled in the beams of our lights. There the real cave dive—and Pablo's line, a heavy ski-rope—began, with a restriction under the dome's brow. Bypassing side-tunnels and oval portals in the floor ("No flow, no go"), we kicked on directly to the Gruta, and surfaced within its echoing amphitheater. A brief rest, then Madden and Skiles struck out for virgin territory.

Forty minutes later, Madden returned, describing a dangerous dive between low, crumbly ceilings and a silty floor. An ever-deepening series of bumpy

ledges—40 feet falling to 50, 50 to 60, 60 to 75—zigzagging on down into major deco territory. The French cave diver had preceded them; they followed his line to its end, then unspooled a thousand feet of their own beyond it. About 500 feet in, the tunnel spiked straight up toward the surface, swallowing their light beams; the “Dome of Beldar,” Madden called it.

He had tied off a knotted line at the entrance of Pratinha. By diving again to count knots and recording width, height and depth, he could amass survey data, crunch the numbers in his Powerbook and print out a schematic map of the entire dive, some 2,000 feet of surveyed cave. Because Pablo’s line had the traverse covered—unknotted and nonregulation as it was—Madden wanted to yank his own, leaving the cave uncluttered and preserving for Pablo’s line the honor of primacy. I could save Madden a swim back to the Gruta by diving with him and reeling in the line as he surveyed.

Madden and Skiles are among the world’s best at what they do, a largely invisible activity. By diving with them I could at least cast their abilities into brilliant relief. To wit: halfway through the traverse the reel jammed, as I had feared it would. All the silt from the exploration dive was slowly washing through the tunnel. As I fiddled with the tangle, I drifted into a bank of clay, crashing the vis to Nestle’s Quik. I tugged out about 30 feet of line to get to the fouled knot—big mistake. Lariats of floating twine soon grappled me like the antibodies in *Fantastic Voyage*. I had to calm down, untangle myself and wait for Madden to come back. Eventually he did, gracefully frog-kicking, survey pad and pencil in hand, all squared away in military corners—*Top Gun* meets *Dumb and Dumber*.

By the time we climbed out of Pratinha, Skiles had already hoofed it back to the cantina by himself. “All the rules are different here,” he said. “The rock is different, the way the water moves. I got lost for a little while.” The trekking party had returned as well: Andrea and Aluisio caked in mud; Pablo (the unstoppable force) with a sliced foot bound in a bloody T-shirt. But they had found a new sink, spelunked back a ways, and made a brief blind dive into a milky pit. They named the site Poço Zebode (roughly translated: Joe Goat’s Sink) after the farmhand who led them to it. Aluisio Cardoso of CRA had been there to enter the name into his official book; Zebode himself was beaming proudly.

An important part of our mission during Project Chapada Diamantina was to liaison with the locals one needed to know to get in the water, and to help them organize themselves to promote dive ecotourism. With Lima Campos the diplomat/diver; Skiles the explorer/hydrogeologist; and Madden the explorer/entrepreneur, the Project was a Dream Team for that task. The Brazilians hardly needed a lecture on ecology; a sign on the path to Pratinha quoted (in Portuguese translation) Chief Seattle’s famous warning: “When the last tree has fallen, when the last river has dried, and the last fish caught, then men will learn that they can’t eat money.”

Still, the Chapada is a poor region, with crushing unemployment. Mike Madden in particular, Official Adviser to the Governor of the State of Yucatán for cave resource evaluation and guide training curriculum, was someone to listen to. His “Indiana Jones Adventure” snorkeling trips had raised a number of Mexicans into prosperous middle-class. Pratinha, Madden felt, with some infrastructure already in place, could start a similar business with a minimum investment. They’d need guides, and a trained instructor to teach them—a possible gig for Pablo Koss. Seated at a long table laden with the fruits of Pratinha, the team talked late into the evening, and when we parted—Brazil-

ian bear hugs all around—it was with the warmest feelings of shared adventure.



On the dizzying rim of Impossibles, Aluisio Cardoso of CRA said something in Portuguese to Aluisio Lima Campos, who laughed and translated into English: “If you got a big butt, you’re out of luck!”

We soon found out why. An ingenious Rube Goldberg trail to the bottom began at a chimney crack less than a foot wide. Nose to the stone, exhaling profoundly, we wriggled through the vertical gap, then crawled on hands and knees through a tunnel, shimmied down notched logs polished by ages of use, scrambled on scree to the floor of the sink. We all made it—just.

For barrel-chested Pablo Koss, it would’ve been a real squeeze. But he was back at the pousada recuperating. That morning he’d nearly electrocuted himself plugging in the compressor. Half of the town of Lençóis had been blacked out by the explosion. We’d all been shaken by Pablo’s close call, and had departed the inn in a state of confusion—which would have consequences later on.

Still, it was hard now to feel anything but elation. On the floor of Impossibles we encountered a Garden of Eden—a shady oasis of wild banana and lemon trees, tall green sedge and sugarcane. There was even a symbolic serpent near the cavern mouth: an ancient, leaky diesel pump and irrigation pipe snaking up to the fields above. Impossibles was typical of the region’s sinks, Cardoso told us. You drive and drive (and drive) through flat, dusty fields, park at last beside some inconsequential-looking patch of brush, walk a little ways along a red dirt trail and—boom!—the world falls away in a titanic crater. There were dozens of such sinks in the Chapada, Cardoso said, each with a diesel pump at the bottom leaking fuel directly into the groundwater.

Madden the technocrat was already planning solutions—electric generators topside; pull the water, don’t push it. Skiles, meanwhile, was still on the rim behind his tripod, jumping up and down and howling like the wild apeman of Olduvai Gorge. No butt-check for Skiles; he buckled on a rope and rappelled down to join us. (“Not to be a snob or anything, but it’s more fun.”)

It took a few hours (and a few hired hands) to grapple the gear down by rope, but once underway, exploring Impossibles’ flooded air passages was a breeze. Using inflated BCs as rafts, we pushed tanks and batteries and lights ahead of us along the shallow stream. The cave was a showcase of speleothegms: from massive, wind-curved stalactites defying gravity above the two-storied cavern mouth, to delicate pipestem clusters, dripping candelabras, and curlicue “bacon strips” everywhere on the slick caramel walls.

The passage shot straight back under the earth’s crust. In places it dwindled to a needle’s eye—just a dive-mask wide; then ballooned open to blue rooms of 20-foot-deep pools over bright white calcite floors. At the bottom of one such pool we found the skeleton of a man-sized creature. A handprint beside the bones told the story—someone had absconded with the skull. There we split into two teams: Lima Campos, Andrea Nathan and Skiles would push on with snorkels, looking for the end of Krug’s promised 2,000-meter tunnel; Madden and I, meanwhile, would clip on side-mount tanks and head straight down through a hole, diving into the basement rooms.

There was a separate watery (Continued on page 142)

An *RSD* Gear Review



Vision Quest

The search is over. ScubaLab eyes some 50 masks and chooses 10 clear winners.

by JON HARDY

There is simply no other piece of dive gear that is so fundamental to the ability to function under water. Without a mask, you'd hardly be able to see past the tip of your nose, and all those other, more expensive gear items—regulators, computers, pressure gauges—would be useless. And yet, when it comes time to purchase gear, the mask gets short shrift. It's high time for divers, instructors and dive magazines to get serious about our underwater windows.

While there are several hundred scuba masks available, you need to find the one that best fits you and provides the features that will most enhance your diving experience. And when it comes to choosing your mask, there is one factor that outweighs all the others put together: fit. Fit is the be-all and end-all of the scuba mask. If it doesn't fit, your mask will leak, hurt your nose, increase stress and make diving a miserable experience. See the complete guide to selecting a mask that fits ("How to Make Your Mask Trouble-Free," page 39).

Masks not only let you see under water, but can provide improved or corrected vision. From down-vision to color-correction to prescription lenses, today's masks allow you to have underwater vision that is limited only by the clarity of the water.

There is a problem, however. With so much variety and so little understanding, many divers are using masks that are ill-suited to them. With that in mind, here is your first step to finding the perfect mask—a complete guide to mask features.

Materials

When it comes to masks, silicone is king. Most mask parts are made of this synthetic resin as it is nonallergenic and resists deterioration better than the older synthetic-rubber compounds. It also can be made transparent or opaque. One caution: Silicone can become discolored if left in contact with other diving gear containing colored rubber. Today's mask frames and buckles are nearly all made of a hard plastic that is lighter and less expensive than the older metal components.

Mask Features by Manufacturer

	BODY COLOR	MODEL TO FIT SMALL FACES	NUMBER OF LENSES AVAILABLE	CORRECTIVE LENSES AVAILABLE	PURGE VALVE AVAILABLE	TYPE OF STRAP USED	PROTECTIVE BOX OR BAG	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	ALSO AVAILABLE
APOLLO SPORTS 800-231-0909	B,C		2	✓		S	PB	\$65-\$85	CLIP FOR LIGHT ATTACHMENT
BEUCHAT 800-248-0005	B,C,G,W	✓	1,2,3	✓		S	PB	\$58-\$82	HAND-PAINTED FRAMES; RUBBER BODIES; NUMBERED STRAPS
BODY GLOVE 714-848-4832	C	✓	1,2,3,4		✓	S,W	None	\$15.95-\$59.95	PADDED NEOPRENE STRAPS
CRESSI-SUB 800-338-9143	B,C	✓	1,2	✓		S,W	PB	\$51-\$74	OLDER STYLE OVAL MASKS IN BLACK AND WHITE
DACOR 847-446-9555	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S,W	PB	\$50-\$105	NUMBERED STRAPS
H2ODYSSSEA 800-999-0019	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S	None	\$25-\$30 \$45-\$50	VISION CORRECTION FOR NEAR- AND FARSIGHTEDNESS; BIFOCAL LENSES
INTERNATIONAL DIVERS INC. 800-257-2822	B,C	✓	1,2	✓	✓	S	PB	\$30-\$40	OLDER STYLE OVAL MASKS IN BLACK; NUMBERED STRAPS
MARES 203-855-0631	B,C,G	✓	1,2,6	✓		S,W	SB	\$49.95-\$149.95	—
OCEAN EDGE 800-922-1764	B,C	✓	1,2,3	✓		W	PB	\$39-\$82	PLASTIC COLOR ACCENT FITTINGS INCLUDED WITH MASKS
OCEANIC 510-562-0500	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓		S	PB	\$39.95-\$89.95	NUMBERED STRAPS
OCEAN MASTER 800-841-7007	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	W	PB	\$69-\$89	—
SCUBAPRO 800-GO-SCUBA	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S,W	SB	\$60-\$100	HAND-PAINTED FRAMES; BRIGHT SIGHT ANTI-FOG THRU-MA LENSES
SEAC SUB 619-459-1836	B,C	✓	1,2	✓		S	PB	\$27-\$38	—
SEA DIVE 310-327-8150	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S,W	PB	\$15-\$70	CLEAR PRODUCT LABELING AS TO FIT; NUMBERED STRAPS
SEA QUEST 619-438-1101	B,C	✓	1,2,4	✓	✓	S,W	PB	\$34-\$78	PURGE POSITION OFF-CENTER
SHERWOOD SCUBA 888-SHERWOOD	B,C		1,2	✓		W	None	\$52-\$58	—
TUSA 562-498-3708	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S,W	PB	\$57-\$83	—
U.S. DIVERS 714-540-8010	B,C	✓	1,2,3,4	✓	✓	S,W	None	\$45-\$99	ALSO HAS SOME OLDER STYLE OVAL MASKS IN BLACK AND CLEAR
ZEAGLE 813-782-5568	B,G		1,2		✓	S	SB	\$44.95-\$54.95	—

BODY COLORS

B = black C = clear G = gray W = white

STRAP USED

S = split W = wide

PROTECTIVE BOX OR BAG

PB = Plastic Box SB = Soft Bag

Lenses

The lenses of scuba masks are made of tempered glass, not plastic, because plastic distorts, fogs, scratches easily and can't be used to improve or correct vision.

Masks come with either a single front lens, or two lenses separated at the nose. The number of lenses you should look for in a mask is determined by fit, features and personal preference. Two lenses are necessary to provide optical correction, as visual acuity may not be the same in both eyes. But some divers find the divider between the lenses to be distracting, and should avoid double-lens masks. Some manufacturers put additional windows on the side panels, bringing the total number of lenses to three or four. This provides better peripheral vision, but also causes reflection distortion and perception of movement that some divers find distracting.

Most prescription lenses correct only for nearsightedness (myopia) in increments of one-half diopter from -1 to -6. A few go as high as -10. If the manufacturer of the mask that fits you best does not provide prescription lenses, there are several specialty companies that make lenses to order. Check with your dealer. Many divers prefer to dive with contact lenses, which provide full-time vision correction with any mask.

A few mask makers and specialty companies offer color-correcting lenses, which help to restore some of the reds, oranges and yellows that are lost as you go deeper and deeper under water. They work, but at or near the surface these lenses make the world look pink, and they act as a filter so less light gets to your eyes.

For those of us with older eyes, bifocal lenses are available from Mares and H2Odysea and from several specialty companies as add-ons.

"Anti-fogging" mask lenses have come and gone from the diving scene, and several are available again. The concept is akin to the unsinkable ship, which works just fine until the iceberg or torpedo arrives. Some anti-fogging masks do well until the sunscreen or makeup hits them. For now, still be prepared to clean and defog them.

The Body

Masks come in many different sizes, shapes and colors. Some manufacturers even label or specify whether a particular mask is made for a small, medium or large face. In addition, most

manufacturers have a line of masks for divers with smaller faces, such as women and younger divers (see chart, page 30).

Low-volume masks have the advantage of using less space—moving the lens closer to your eyes and providing more peripheral vision, less distortion, improved light transmission, less bulk and therefore less drag. They're also easier to clear and equalize. Yet they still need to fit without touching your nose or eyebrows.

The color of the mask body affects not only appearance, but also how you see. Photographers and divers who are distracted by spatial distortion to the side prefer dark, particularly black, mask bodies, as these allow the eyes to adapt to reduced light and block out side movement. Clear mask bodies, on the other hand, let more light in, provide some peripheral vision, and may help alleviate the claustrophobic feelings some divers experience.

Mask Defoggers—At a Glance



Clear Edge No-Fog

Sport Divers Manufacturing, 305-947-5692

Price: \$4/oz., also in combo pack with new mask prep for \$6

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Oil & vinegar dressing

Easy To Use? Good consistency for drops, but cap is easy to lose



Diver's Best! Mask Defogger

Diver's Best! Products, 800-991-3483

Price: \$6-\$6.50/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Smashed guppies (when rubbed in).

Easy To Use? Thick gel, small orifice, rigid bottle. Try stepping on it.



Diver's Solution No Fog

Aquarius Mfg., 800-435-8974

Price: \$5.50/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Windex.

Easy To Use? Goof-proof spray on.



Ever-See Defogger Liquid

International Divers, 800-257-2822

Price: \$3.50/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Soapy water.

Easy To Use? Slightly runny. Easy-to-lose screw-off cap.



500psi Mask Defog

500 psi, 800-221-0889

Price: \$3.50/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Blue Goo Handcleaner.

Easy To Use? Convenient rockertop, but slow-flow gel.



Oceanways Diving Mask Defogger

Oceanways, 310-327-8150

Price: \$5/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Viper venom.

Easy To Use? Label says it all: "Eye irritant. Avoid eye contact."



Sea Drops

McNett Corporation, 360-671-2227

Price: \$2.56/oz.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Spit.

Easy To Use? A squeeze bottle that works as advertised!



Spit

Manufacturer: You

Price: Cheap.

Looks Like It Might Really Be: Depends on last night.

Easy To Use? Depends on last night.

Performance



poor—occasional fogging on first dive, frequent fogging on second and third dives.



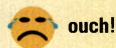
good—occasional fogging on second and third dives.



excellent—one application works at least three dives in one day.



no sting



ouch!

This chart is reprinted from our review of mask defoggers ("Spit or Squirt?"), which was published in the Jan./Feb. '96 issue of RSD. Mask defoggers that have been introduced since that review have not been tested and are not included here.

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Thinking about underwater photography? Think black. We asked several well-known photographers their mask preference, and each agreed with UWATEC President Bret Gilliam, "Silicone black skirt—when looking through a viewfinder you want to keep distractions to a minimum." For *National Geographic* photographer Howard Hall, that means, "A black skirt—I need a mask that keeps the light out." Adds Carl Roessler, author of *Mastering Underwater Photography*: "My only two requirements for a mask are—black silicone skirt and a nose pouch big enough for my schnozz."

—BELINDA F. TRIPLETT

Like mini-skirts, purge valves in masks have come and gone over the years, and have recently made a comeback. Problems of position, size, sealing ability and dependability have been solved, making these newer valves more reliable and useful. Purge valves make it easier to clear your mask and are particularly useful if you have a tough time getting a good seal.

All scuba masks have nose pockets so divers can equalize pressure during descents. Most can be used with one hand, but you should check this at the same time you're checking the mask for fit.

Most modern scuba masks have a double-flanged face seal that provides a second sealing surface to help make the mask air- and watertight. For most divers, these double seals are useful and comfortable provided the mask fits otherwise.

Like mini-skirts,

Straps and Buckles

While mask straps and buckles have been improved and made easier to use, manufacturers' claims of easy, one-handed adjustment under water are mostly exaggerated. Using cold, gloved hands with no visual reference, it's nearly impossible to use small, close-fitting plastic buckles and narrow straps. When it comes to buckles, look for those that pivot, swiveling at the point where they attach to the mask frame to help provide better strap placement.

Straps that are split into two parallel straps at the back of the head are more comfortable for many divers than single straps. Another simple innovation that makes strap adjustment easier are the numbers marked on some straps, used to indicate how tightly the strap is adjusted. Just remember which setting you normally use, and you can quickly adjust the strap after another diver has used your mask or you've used a different head covering.

Protective Boxes and Bags

With higher prices for masks and with specially made lenses, it has become important to protect your mask from being crushed or the lens from being broken. Most manufacturers supply plastic boxes or soft padded bags with their masks. Some of the boxes are hard to open and close, while others break far more easily than a mask would. But then that's the idea—break the box, not the mask. Mask boxes and bags are also available as add-ons.

Masks in Review

ScubaLab chooses 15 points of view.

All manufacturers known to distribute masks in the U.S. were asked to submit masks for this review. The 19 manufacturers featured here submitted some 50 masks of the several hundred models or variations they produce. A careful review revealed that many are foreign-made and that the same mask may be distributed by two or more different manufacturers.

You may see stickers on lenses with the code "ANSI Z86.11." This refers to the quality of the tempered glass according to standards established by the American National Standards Institute. ANSI provides many valuable standards, even including training standards for scuba. On the other hand, a "CE" mark on a mask is a symbol related to free trade in the European Common Market, and is not related to the quality of the mask.

Much of the advertising and product-catalog text for masks is nothing more than hype, some of which is downright mystifying. Here are some direct quotations about various masks: "provides ambience," "designer series," "avant-garde," "accessorize the face," "young, lively and trendy," "fits all faces," "self-purging." Are we talking about masks, wine, clothes or makeup? Please note: Masks do not purge themselves, and there is no one mask that "fits all."

We have selected 15 masks from 10 manufacturers that provide the most modern and useful innovations. These are described in detail while the other manufacturers and models are covered by the features chart. Keep in mind that no matter how wonderful the mask may be, if it doesn't fit, then it's the wrong mask for you.

TESTERS' CHOICES

Dacor Pursuit and Elite

Well known for an extensive line of diverse masks, including those for hard-to-fit faces, Dacor continues to produce a broad selection of masks. In the area of innovation, Dacor offers Sea





DACOR PURSUIT

Shades in the Pursuit for color-correction and a quick-release buckle on the Elite. Although this buckle requires a direct, hard push to release—so it won't accidentally open—this innovation may lead to easier fitting, as well as better strap adjustment and easier strap replacement on future Dacor masks.

Mares ESA

Mares offers a large selection of masks, but best of all is the ESA, one of the few down-vision masks available (also see Oceanic). ESA's six windows include the two in the front, which can be corrective prescription lenses (-1 to -10), two side windows for peripheral vision and two angled bottom lenses that can also be made to match a prescription (+1.5 to +3.0). These bottom lenses make it possible to view your instruments, buckles and straps as never before. The ESA is a Testers' Choice for innovation and for improving a diver's ability to perform under water.



MARES ESA

Oceanic Bivu 2 and Bivu 4

Oceanic has a pair of Testers' Choices, the Bivu 2 and 4. These masks use prisms to provide down-vision. They have two or four lenses respectively, but actually there is another pair of lenses with the prisms ground into the bottoms of the forward lenses. The down-vision is easy to use and works well for viewing any-



OCEANIC BIVU 4

thing on your chest or stomach and for seeing instruments without putting them directly in front of your mask.

Ocean Master Equalizer

Ocean Master specializes in masks and snorkels and receives a Testers' Choice designation for its innovative Q strap, available on all Equalizer masks. This quick-adjust strap works easily in or out of the water and with or without gloves. When selecting an Ocean Master mask, be sure your nose fits comfortably and that you can easily equalize without interference from the purge valve.



OCEAN MASTER EQUALIZER

Scubapro Tri-Vent, XQ, Frameless and Aqualizer

Scubapro has pioneered several positive innovations in mask design. Its best selling masks, the Tri-Vent and XQ are made especially to move bubbles from mask purging or regulator exhaust away from the diver's face and out of the field of vision. They work very well as designed. Another innovation is the Frameless mask, which is extremely popular, and fits many hard-to-fit faces.

Another innovative mask from Scubapro is the Aqualizer, due in dive stores this summer. It is designed to be easy to clear and to equalize with just one finger.



SCUBAPRO TRI-VENT



SCUBAPRO FRAMELESS

BEST OF THE REST

The following five masks have been selected as the best examples of some important mask features. See chart (page 30) for the other manufacturers that distribute similar masks.

Single lens—International Divers Inc. Sea-Quence

The low-volume Sea-Quence mask from IDI comes with a pivoting buckle and split strap. Available with frames in several colors, it also comes with a plastic protective box. As is true of most masks, it uses a double-edge seal on the skirt of the body and is made from medical-grade liquid silicone. IDI has position counters (numbers) molded into the mask strap to make it easy to adjust or reset the strap.



IDI SEA-QUENCE

Side windows—Beuchat Maximo II

The Maximo II by Beuchat exemplifies the best of the multilens masks that provide side-vision. It is a three-lens panoramic-style mask sized for the adult face. Pivoting buckles, a split strap, position counters, a wide selection of both frame and body colors, and a plastic protective box round out the Maximo II's features. Beuchat also offers hand-painted frames and masks with rubber rather than silicone bodies.



BEUCHAT MAXIMO II

Dual lenses—Apollo Prestige

All masks in the Apollo line are of the two-lens type. They come in clear or black silicone with a variety of choices for the color of the frame. These low-volume masks use a split strap and come with a plastic protective box. The particular value of a two-lens mask is its ability to accommodate optical lenses that can correct vision, in this case for nearsightedness from -1.5 to -8.0 with separate prescriptions for each eye. Apollo also offers a system light



APOLLO PRESTIGE

adapter, which provides a way to clip a light onto the mask for hands-free diving.

Purge valve—Zeagle Beta

The Beta by Zeagle is a fine example of a modern, effective and reliable purge valve mask. It is a single-lens mask with a double-seal skirt made of a soft, opaque gray silicone. The buckles pivot and the strap is split. Dive mask pouches made of padded nylon are also available.



ZEAGLE BETA

Bifocal lens—H2Odyssey MS7

H2Odyssey is a specialty company offering primarily soft goods, such as masks, snorkels and fins. Its large selection of masks includes the very popular MS7 style. This is a dual-lens mask that can be fitted with prescription lenses from -1.5 to -8.0; as can many other such masks. But of special value are the bifocal lenses also available from +1.0 to +4.0 in increments of 0.5 in the same mask lens. These low-volume masks come in black, clear and white with many different frame colors, and use a pivoting buckle and a split strap.



H2ODYSSEA MS7

How to Make Your Mask Trouble-Free

No fog, no floods, no worry—as long as you follow these simple techniques for selecting, using and caring for your personal porthole. ▶ By JON HARDY

Perhaps the oldest piece of true diving equipment is the mask. Like other scuba gear, its simple purpose is to allow our terrestrial bodies to function in a liquid world. The mask's contribution to this adaptation is to provide an air space in front of our eyes so they can focus. Your nose must also be available to equalize the mask's volume and your head's natural air spaces. Simple functions to be sure, but finding the right mask for you can be a complex task centered around one overriding concern: proper fit.

Selection: A 10-Step Program

Here's a remarkable but true statement: A poorly fitting mask is the most common and significant problem of dive gear selection. That's why we've designed the following 10-step protocol, an ultimate fit test. It's so detailed you may be embarrassed to try all the steps, but the more of them you do, particularly if you have a hard-to-fit face, the better the fit and therefore the greater your safety and enjoyment will be.

Step 1 ▶ Get Specific

With so many masks to choose from, the process will be far easier if you can first narrow the field by defining your own needs and preferences: Do you want a clear or an opaque mask? Two lenses or three? Prescription or nonprescription? High- or low-volume? With purge or without? Each of these considerations is discussed at length in this issue's review of masks beginning on page 29. After you know the types of masks you're looking for, you're ready for a trip to your dive retailer to begin trying on available models.



WHEN TRYING ON MASKS FOR FIT, THE SNIFF TEST IS NOT THE PLACE TO BEGIN. INSTEAD, LOOK UP AND GENTLY PLACE THE MASK ON YOUR FACE—WITHOUT USING THE STRAP AND WITHOUT INHALING. IT SHOULD REST EVENLY AND COMFORTABLY. HAVE SOMEONE CHECK FOR GAPS.

Step 2► Look Up

Once at the store, the “sniff test” is not the place to begin. Do this first: Without using the strap and without inhaling, look straight up and gently place the mask on your face. It should rest comfortably and evenly, contouring to your face with no gaps. Have someone else also look for gaps.

Step 3► Chomp on a Reg

Now place a regulator mouthpiece in your mouth. While still looking up, there should be no gaps. Again, have someone else look for them.

Step 4► OK, Now Sniff

Without using the strap, place the mask on your face while looking forward. Gently inhale a small amount. The mask should stay in place. A strong inhalation would close minor leaks and make it an invalid test.

Step 5► Repeat

With your regulator mouthpiece in your mouth, repeat the sniff test, gently. Still no leaks? Still comfortable? Keep going.

Step 6► Adjust

Using the strap, adjust for best fit. Check to see how easy the straps are to adjust when the mask is in place. If you normally dive with gloves and hood, try this adjustment with these items on.

Step 7► Check the Nose

The mask should fit without touching the tip or bridge of your nose, or being uncomfortable in the area between your nose and upper lip.

Step 8► Repeat

With regulator in, again check the nose.

Step 9► Equalize Easy

With reg still in place, try using the nose pocket to equalize with one hand. It should be easy to do with one hand and not hurt your nose.

Step 10► Dive 'Em

If at all possible, try your best two or three masks in the pool or open water.

After following this 10-step program, you should have a mask that fits, even if your face is hard to fit. To further improve fit and comfort, consider replacing the strap with a neoprene or similar strap.

Fog Patrol

A fogged mask is more than just an annoyance; by reducing what you can see, it also increases stress levels, making accidents more likely. A fogged mask also marks you as a less-than-competent diver. Keeping a clear view takes some attention to detail, but it is an aspect of diving preparation where an ounce of prevention is worth several pounds of cure.

Why a Mask Fogs

The main reason your mask fogs on the inside is that the lens is dirty. Moisture from your breath can adhere to: debris or the residue of salts or minerals in water; chemicals left over from the manufacturing process (preservatives and mold-release com-



ABOVE: BE SURE TO DETERMINE HOW EASY THE STRAPS ARE TO ADJUST WHILE THE MASK IS IN PLACE. BELOW: TO FURTHER IMPROVE YOUR MASK'S FIT AND COMFORT, CONSIDER USING A NEOPRENE OR SIMILAR STRAP.

An Old Trick for Mask Emergencies

Completely losing your mask or having it break while under water are the most serious of mask emergencies. If this were to happen, and both you and your buddy stay cool, the two of you can work together while in physical contact to ascend safely. If you are alone in open water, ascending is not the problem – bubbles go up and so will you if you put air in your BC. But how to control your ascent or make a safety stop? How can you monitor your instruments—dive computer, depth gauge, watch—without a mask? An old trick is

to lean forward so your head is level, cup the edge of one hand across your eyebrows and gently exhale some air into this pocket. Your hand will trap enough air long enough for you to read your instruments and then continue on. Of course this needs to be repeated each time you want to do a status check.

With lesser mask emergencies such as a broken strap or buckle, hold the mask in place, abort the dive and ascend to the surface. Do not try to continue with a broken piece of gear.



THE CLASSIC SNIFF TEST SHOULD BE PERFORMED WITH ONLY A GENTLE INHALE. A STRONG INHALATION WILL CLOSE MINOR LEAKS AND INVALIDATE THE TEST.

pounds); residue from sunscreen, makeup and moisturizers; preservatives or lubricants from other dive gear. A clean lens allows moisture to sheet down instead of adhering. Also contributing to fogging is the high humidity inside the mask, tiny pits or imperfections in the lens, exhaling

inside and outside of every lens or window with a mild abrasive such as Soft Scrub, toothpaste or the compounds supplied for this purpose by manufacturers and dive stores.

Apply defog solution before each dive. Spit is just not good enough for

excessively through the nose into the mask and unstable silicone compounds in some older or cheaper masks.

How to Defog Your Mask

Prep the mask. You need to prepare your mask to be defogged if: it is a new mask; the mask has not been used for some time; or it develops patches that seem resistant to defogging. To prepare your mask, scrub both the

most divers or masks. The defog solution must be capable of thoroughly cleaning the lens as well as any pits or imperfections. It is far more effective to use a commercial mask defogger, baby shampoo or diluted dishwashing liquid. Rub all inside lenses completely and rinse thoroughly. For best results, defog while the mask is still dry.

Keep it wet. In some dive situations it is possible to leave your mask immersed in water between dives. This will make defogging easier or may allow you to go all day on one defog.

If all else fails. If for some reason your efforts to stay defogged fail during the dive, let a small amount of water into your mask and then from time to time lean forward to rinse the lens.

Why a Mask Leaks

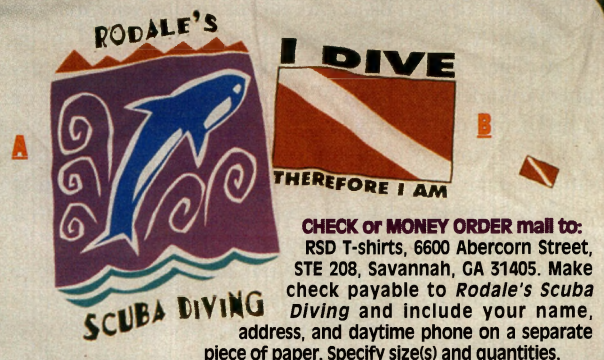
There are six basic reasons your mask may spring a leak: (1) it is the wrong size or shape for your face; (2) it is adjusted too tightly or too loosely; (3) it has a defect in the purge valve or where a lens seats in the body; (4) there is something under the seal such as hair or part of your hood; (5) facial hair prevents a good seal; (6) smile lines and facial movement break the seal.

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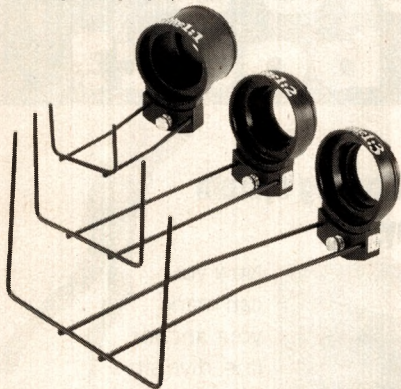
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With proper fit, adjustment and care, most of these problems can be solved. Not putting gloves on until just before you enter the water allows you to feel, adjust and ensure a seal with your mask. Regarding facial hair, you have two choices: shave it or use food-grade silicone to help seal the area where the mask rests on this hair. Finally, sometimes the price you pay for smiling and laughing under water is the need to clear your mask.

Clear Your Mask the Right Way

Mask clearing is usually taught well in dive courses. But certified divers often do not take the time to practice and therefore are hard-pressed to clear even a small leak some time after certification. With a purge valve, simply hold the mask to your face while positioning it so the purge is the lowest point. Then exhale a steady stream of bubbles; this displaces the water out through the purge. Without a purge, look toward the surface, usually at about a 45-degree angle, and press on the top of the mask so the seal at the bottom is slightly broken as you exhale a steady stream of bubbles, displacing the water from the bottom of the mask. This method will work on any mask, with or without a purge, but you may need to find the optimum head position so all the water drains out.

Attaching and Adjusting the Snorkel

The most important thing to know about attaching your snorkel to your mask is that you don't have to. There are types of diving and diving environments where a snorkel would be of no use, such as caves and under ice, or times when it would be a detriment, such as when using a DPV or tow sled. In these cases you can either leave the snorkel behind or you can strap it to some other part of your gear as is often done with knives.

If you do attach the snorkel to your mask, it is usually placed on the left side to avoid the regulator's primary hose, using one of the many types of snorkel keepers now available. These can be simple or complex, including swivels and quick releases. The snorkel barrel can be placed on the outside or inside of the mask strap, provided it does not

What's Up With Heads Up?

For several years, manufacturers have been working on and promising masks with heads-up displays (HUD). Like a Top Gun pilot closing in on the bogies, you would be able to see your vital information—time, depth, air, deco status—displayed on your mask's lens. Right now, however, there are more problems than solutions with HUDs, so don't hold your breath. Other technology in optics, information transfer and display will need to be proven in other fields before they can be effectively applied to scuba. Bottom line: HUD for divers is still a few years away.

cause discomfort or break the mask seal. By moving the keeper or the position on the mask strap, you should be able to adjust it up or down and back and forth so the snorkel enters your mouth comfortably without any undue twists or stress points. It should point approximately straight up when you are swimming face-down on the surface or looking forward at a comfortable angle of about 45 degrees.

Adjusting the Mask Strap

Although most mask straps are advertised as having easy, quick adjustments, few live up to their hype. Mask adjustment is best done on the surface, preferably out of the water with no gloves. A mask should seal on your face because it fits, not because the strap is tight. In fact, if too tight, the strap can cause the mask skirt to curl up and leak. If a strap or buckle breaks on a properly fitting mask, you should be able to keep it on your face and clear of water with only the slightest suction through your nose.

Care and Storage

Basic care means rinsing your mask with fresh water after each dive and drying it out of the sun and away from excessive heat. With modern masks, the use of any type of "preservative" spray is likely to cause more problems than it solves. These sprays can cause straps to slip, lenses to fog and chemical reactions that can lead to deterioration.

Before use, after use and before storage, check your mask—particularly the strap—for deterioration. Having a replacement strap that fits your mask is an excellent idea, as not all masks use the same size strap. Store your mask in a cool, dry, dark place in its box or bag. If you don't use a box or bag, store the mask well away from other dive gear to prevent discoloration. When transporting your mask in a gear bag, either use its box or bag, or be sure the mask is well padded.

YOUR CAREER AS A Diving Professional

You're about to jump into your car to make the daily dash to the office. You spy the sticker plastered on your bumper: "I'd rather be scuba diving." You stop dead in your tracks. The cogs and gears in your brain begin to turn: What if I had a career in diving? I could be heading to a dive boat right now instead of a cubicle. Hello Baywatch, good-bye Dilbert...

There are hundreds of careers in diving, but most fall into two categories: recreational dive leaders and commercial divers. A recreational dive leader instructs and supervises recreational divers. A commercial diver accomplishes work underwater.

But the career you envision may not fit into the standard round hole. There are divers who have combined underwater skills with other training and talents to create specialized careers, as marine scientists, underwater photographers and cinematographers and dive journalists. You find former dive instructors and commercial divers working for training agencies, equipment manufacturers, engineering firms, publishing companies, hospitals and law firms; they work as accountants, sales and marketing professionals, managers, engineers, instructional designers, writers, editors, medical researchers, hyperbaric medical technicians, nurses, physicians and lawyers.

For both tracks—recreational dive leader and commercial diver—you need diving education beyond open-water certification. But before considering training, you'd be smart to complete a four-part exercise.

First, make an honest appraisal of your interests, knowledge, capabilities and motives. That is, take an inventory of your assets and liabilities. Second, research the market for careers in diving. Third, match the items on your personal inventory to opportunities for careers as a diving professional. Fourth, make a career plan.

FIRST, THE PERSONAL INVENTORY

An honest self-appraisal raises some tough questions: What are your motives? Why do you want a career in diving? Just liking the water or outdoor work may not sustain you when the going gets tough.

Do you know what you're getting involved in? Ground your expectations in reality: expect a career that's tough and hard work, especially if you want to climb to the top.

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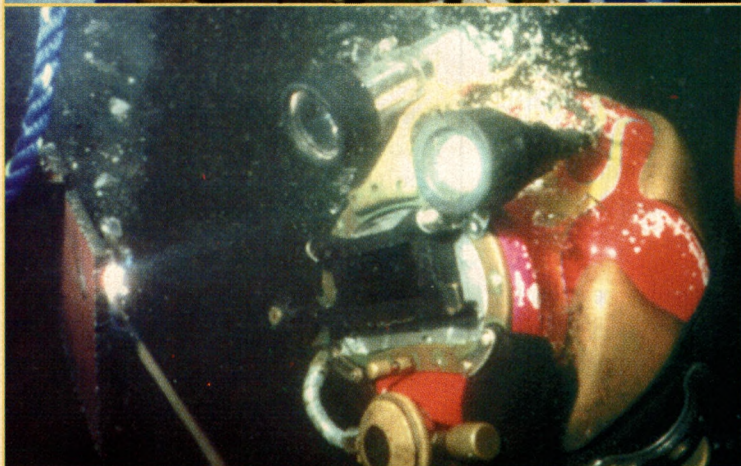


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Other than diving, what can you offer an employer? Your employer will assume you're a skilled diver. Your nondiving capabilities are the ones likely to set you apart from other candidates. Candidates increase their career options when they can offer employers more than just diving skills.

SECOND, RESEARCH & MARKET

Answer some questions: What are your opportunities for earning a living as a diver? How do you get trained? How do you

find a job? How much money can you make as a dive professional? What kind of career can you expect?

Certification agencies are excellent sources of information on careers in recreational diving. The Professional Association of Diving Instructors publishes the PADI Journal for diving professionals (instructors, assistant instructors and divemasters); the National Association of Underwater Instructors publishes NAUI Sources. Many international certification agencies maintain home pages on the world wide web.

For information on careers in commercial diving, contact the Association of Diving Contractors (ADC) and its affiliate, the Association of Commercial Diving Educators (ACDE). Schools that are accredited members of the Association of Commercial Diving Educators are excellent sources of career information.

In your research, don't forget to tap an important source of information that is frequently overlooked: people who work—or have worked—in the industry. Schools can frequently refer you to their graduates. Develop your own network of unbiased expert advisers; cultivate relationships with individuals who work for companies that you admire.

THIRD, EVALUATE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Career counselors talk about finding a good match between the applicant and the job. At this step, you need to be realistic when you evaluate yourself—your strengths, weaknesses, experience, education, training, skills, capabilities, attitudes and motives—against opportunities for careers as a dive professional.

FOURTH, MAKE A CAREER PLAN

Are you ready to take charge of your diving career? No one can do it for you—it's your career. So make a plan—at least a preliminary one—and work it. You may change course along the way, but smart choices should inform departures from your original

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heading. You are investing your time, money and hard work. You are investing your life. Invest carefully.

RECREATIONAL DIVE LEADERS

Recreational dive leaders are paid to help people safely enjoy their recreational time. They play the role of tour guide, teacher, entertainer, adviser and host. You'll enjoy this work if you're a friendly, outgoing person who likes to deal with the public. Most recreational training organizations classify any divemaster, assistant instructor or instructor as a "professional." However, if you are interested in a full-time career as a recreational dive leader, pursue an instructor rating. Without it, your opportunities to find work as a dive leader are limited.

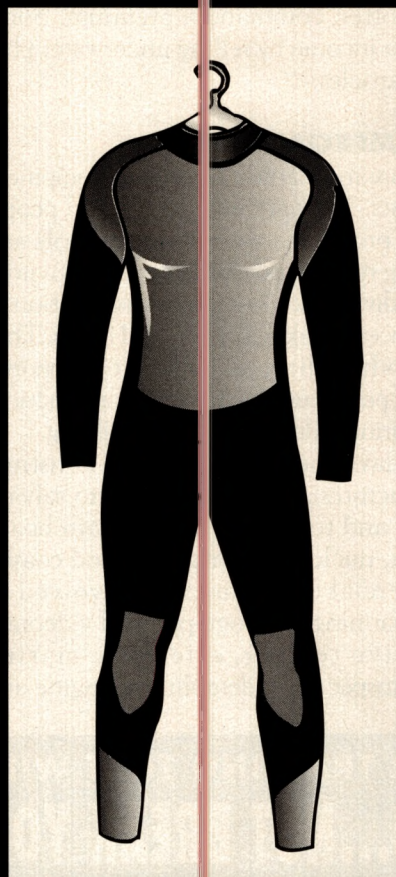
There are several paths to instructor certification. You can complete the required courses in the evenings and weekends over several months. Or you can enroll in a full-time program that can take you from open-water diver to instructor in a matter of weeks.

Instructing and guiding divers are not the only tasks performed by a dive leader. Most retail, charter boat and resort facilities require instructors to learn other skills: scuba equipment repair, retail business practices, boat handling and compressor and outboard engine maintenance. In addition, dive stores and resorts often expect their instructors to teach specialties: underwater photography and video, underwater naturalist, nitrox, rebreathers, etc. Thus, it's smart to learn these special skills and earn instructor ratings at the earliest opportunity. A number of instructor programs offer additional training in skills that make you valuable in retail and resort settings.

FINDING WORK

Most training organizations and schools offer valuable job placement services to their instructors. These services can also provide advice on practical matters: required documentation and immunizations, and the cost of living in various dive destinations.

A different kind of business suit.

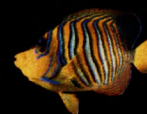


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BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE MONEY

Most people pursue a career as a dive instructor to improve their lifestyle, not their financial status. Starting salaries for instructors average \$14,000 to \$18,000 per year. If you work for a retail facility, you may supplement your income with significant sales commissions. Multilingual instructors often command a premium. Some instructors earn extra income by selling underwater photography or writing articles.

WHAT IS A COMMERCIAL DIVER?

Commercial divers are mechanics, engineers, equipment operators and analysts. They are usually physical people who like technical problems, working with tools and machinery, and facing rugged and changing work environments. Commercial divers use diving as transportation to reach a work site in oceans, lakes, harbors and rivers. They work under water both offshore and inland to support a variety of industries: petroleum operations, construction, utility companies, marine industries and shipbuilding.

Trained divers have the skills needed to construct new underwater structures and oil platforms, to salvage ships and treasures, and to repair and maintain boats, bridges, docks, dams, nuclear power plants, and coastal structures. Commercial divers are also involved in underwater marine farming, photography and videotaping, nondestructive testing, scientific marine surveys, underwater inspections, demolition, engine and

compressor repair and maintenance, operating remote operated vehicles (ROVs), and hyperbaric first aid and dive emergency medical care.

Today more than ever, the industry offers many niches to explore. And individuals can develop their own niches by matching their particular skills, talents and education to emerging industry needs.

COMMERCIAL TRAINING

Commercial diver training is more rigorous and expensive than recreational scuba training. You will invest six to seven months in full-time study at an accredited institution. Some schools offer financial aid and veteran benefits programs.

Commercial diver school is entry-level training. Advanced training comes in your apprenticeship and then on the job, throughout your career in commercial diving. Accredited commercial diving schools offer safe, broad, comprehensive training in all phases of commercial diving, and thorough preparation for employment and advancement in the industry. The goal of commercial training is to produce divers who are ready to enter the work force in both inland coastal and offshore oilfield diving. Commercial diving schools teach all basic skills required by the trade, including use of commercial dive gear with air and mixed gases, underwater welding and inspection, basic hyperbaric medicine and underwater rigging.

After graduation, expect to spend one to two years as an entry-level commercial diver before "breaking out." This includes working as a tender and dive assistant for a year, and spending a year gaining a specialty such as saturation diver, welder or emergency hyperbaric medical technician.

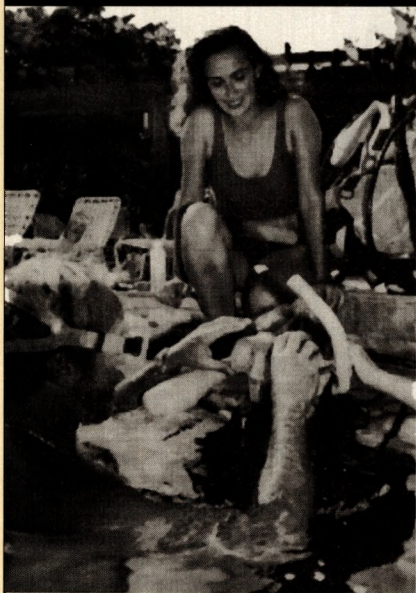
DEMAND EXCEEDS SUPPLY

Commercial diving educators agree that today's demand for entry-level commercial divers far exceeds supply. Given class-size limitations, the number of divers that the six accredited schools can graduate in a year is fixed. With demand outstripping supply, many students are in an enviable position: they can consider offers from three to five different employers—before they graduate. Diploma in hand, grads can be on the job—and earning—in two or three days.

But you don't make big money right out of school. Educators are quick to point out that commercial diving is hard work. You don't start at the top. You have to pay your dues and work your way up. What you put into your career determines what you'll earn. Starting salaries for first-year commercial divers range from \$20,000 to \$22,000 a year. In the second year, this figure can increase to about \$25,000 a year.

As an independent contractor, your average salary is around \$45,000 a year. However, income can be significantly more for enterprising commercial divers and those who are highly skilled in specialty areas such as deep saturation diving and welding.

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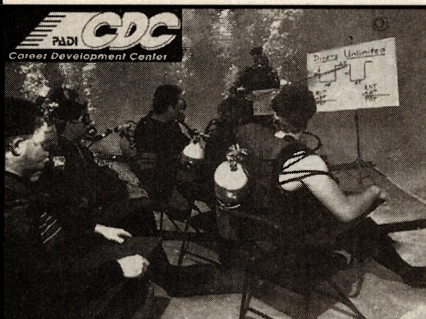
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OCEAN CORPORATION

The Ocean Corporation (TOC) is among the largest commercial diver training organizations in the world. The 28-year-old institute provides the commercial diving industry with 220 entry-level divers annually. It's located in Houston, the commercial diving, offshore construction and oil industry capital of the world.



Commercial Diver Training — the main, full-time course for commercial diver certification — is the TOC cornerstone. The school also offers certification courses in Non-Destructive Testing and Diver Medical Technician Training.

TOC supplements extensive open-water training with instruction in six elaborate tanks. Windows and communication systems allow feedback from instructors outside. Trainers can observe and correct bad diving or work patterns before they become habits. 800-321-0298 or 713-530-0202, Internet: <http://diveweb.com/toc/>

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Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) ►

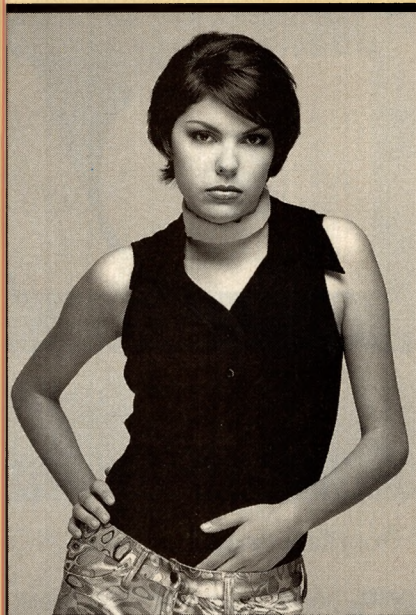
Founded by John Cronin and Ralph Erickson in 1967, PADI's mission is to remain the world's most respected and successful organization in recreational scuba diving and snorkeling. They are committed to quality and service excellence and the professional growth and the security of PADI members with an emphasis on safety, quality and environmental awareness. PADI is the largest certification agency in the world, with more than 70,000 professional members worldwide and training materials in 17 languages. PADI courses are the only ones in the dive industry to be recognized by the prestigious American Council on Education. 1251 East Dyer Rd. #100, Santa Ana, CA 92705-5605, 800-729-7234, Fax 714-540-2609, Internet: <http://www.padi.com>

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National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) Worldwide ►

NAUI Worldwide is the world's oldest nonprofit membership training agency organized solely to support and promote dive safety through education. Formed in 1960, the association is controlled by a Board of member Directors elected by the membership. NAUI Worldwide offers a full range of training programs from Skin Diver through Instructor Course Director, with dozens of specialty courses including nitrox and technical diving. Thousands of member Instructors, affiliated stores, resorts and service centers are located in scores of countries throughout the world. For further information on NAUI Worldwide members, affiliated stores, resorts and certified diving instruction, visit the NAUI Worldwide internet web site at <http://www.naui.org/>, call 909-621-5801, or write NAUI Worldwide, PO Box 14650, Montclair, CA 91763.



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DAN's Credo of Dive Safety Includes Preparedness

From the foreword to "The DAN Emergency Handbook," third edition, **by John Lippmann and Stan Bugg**

Because scuba divers have unique medical needs, you as a recreational diver should be able to recognize the signs of injury and be prepared to manage an injury quickly in the unlikely event it occurs.

Injuries on a dive trip can vary from diver to diver and in their intensity. Divers are exposed to injuries unique to scuba diving—pressure-related injuries like decompression sickness, arterial gas embolism and barotraumas—that few if any other sports can claim.

On the other hand, divers can also suffer cuts, abrasions, sprains or broken bones like a rock climber, a sailor or a backyard volleyball enthusiast, because not all diving activities take place under water.

Beachside or under water, a sting, bite or puncture from a marine creature—usually inflicted in defense—requires preparedness for divers, as well as snorkelers and swimmers, because of the likelihood of contamination and, occasionally, venom.

Divers, snorkelers and swimmers are also subject to ear infections, thermal injuries and travel-related disorders like traveler's diarrhea and ingestion of poisonous fish or contaminated food or water.

What's a diver to do?

"First, be prepared," advises Joel Dovenbarger, DAN's Director of Medical Services. "And make sure you have the right contact information with you." This includes the local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number, DAN's Diving Emergency Hotline and Medical Information numbers and DAN *Travel-Assist's* number in case you require a medical evacuation or health information prior to travel.

While one rescuer begins an active assessment of the scene and initiates help with appropriate rescue skills, another diver should make the needed calls for help.

Next, make sure you have some basic rescue skills, like cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first-aid, first-responder and water rescue skills. Maintenance of the ABCs—Airway, Breathing and Circulation—is your first priority with a serious injury.

In addition, training in oxygen first-aid is an essential skill for divers. Learning to use oxygen and its delivery equipment is not difficult, but it does require proper instruction and practice with a qualified instructor. You may never need it, but oxygen training and equipment on your dive can make a big difference in the outcome for an injured diver.

Finally, some hardware couldn't hurt. DAN

offers not only training in oxygen first-aid for diving accidents, but the equipment as well. You can choose from a variety of oxygen rescue equipment—from the Dual Cylinder Unit, the Standard One-Cylinder Unit, the Rescue Pak, Charter Boat Unit and Mini Unit, to Tru-Fit and Laerdal Pocket masks.

And for those nonpressure-related injuries, DAN has introduced a brand-new addition to its Dive Safety System product line—the DSS-Guardian Diver First-Aid Kit, created expressly by DAN for recreational divers.

If you're interested in receiving DAN oxygen training, call DAN's Training Department at (919) 684-2948, ext. 555. If you'd like to order oxygen equipment or the DSS-Guardian Diver First-Aid Kit, DAN's newest addition to its dive safety product line, call 1-800-446-2671.



DAN Introduces the DSS-Guardian—Diver First-Aid Kit

The DSS-Guardian has been created by DAN expressly for the recreational diver and dive professional. DAN has carefully considered what you—the active diver and dive traveler—need in an emergency.

The DSS-Guardian (DSS stands for Dive Safety System) is ideal for dive leaders and rescue divers. It includes supplies for wound cleaning and management of most types of wounds which could occur in the marine environment. It also provides dressing and bandaging supplies for a wide variety of injuries. All contents are organized in modular, clear-plastic pockets to allow rapid and easy access. It is currently available in

either a soft nylon case or a rugged, water-proof Pelican case.

The DSS-Guardian has been reviewed and approved by the diving, hyperbaric and emergency medical staff at DAN and it comes packed with DAN's medical information/reference book, the *Dive and Travel Medical Guide* for quick reference in treating most dive injuries. It has met the U.S. Coast Guard requirements for licensed vessels, and it has also met boat captains', training and retail association standards.

Regular price for the soft-case first-aid kit is \$79. The hard-case first-aid kit is \$89. To place an order, please call (800) 446-2671.

Boat Smart

instruction

Your port-to-starboard guide for diving efficiently, politely and safely from vessels large and small ▶ By **JOHN FRANCIS**

If truth be told, many new divers fear their first boat trip more than the diving itself. There are the famous perils of the sea, of course, and there's also the fear of being a "newbie" on someone else's territory, of embarrassing yourself in this strange world of "port" and "starboard." Besides, can't captains force you to walk the plank and get married and stuff like that?

Still, you can't really call yourself an open-water diver until you've taken your first boat trip offshore. So we've collected orientation tips from some of the country's most experienced dive boat skippers. They turn out to be friendly folks, actually. Read on, and get your sea legs.

A Day or Two Before

It's all in your mind, a wise one said. OK, most of it anyway. Don't feed your natural anxiety by being ill-prepared. Don't generate mistakes by rushing to get ready at the last minute. You should always inspect your gear well before a dive trip, but it's especially important when you're on a boat with no dive shop in sight. Find out now whether you need a new fin strap or if you still have both gloves.

▶ **What To Bring** In addition to your usual gear, bring a "save-a-dive" kit and a small first-aid kit, including seasickness medication (see "Fast Fixes For Emergencies," RSD, Jan./Feb. '97). Tanks and weights are usually provided in vacation destinations, but often not domestically. Phone ahead to clarify your equipment needs if there is any question as well as to confirm your reservation.

Bring a towel and lots of warm clothes, including a windbreaker or a dive parka—it's colder on the ocean than you might expect, even in tropical destinations where rainstorms can occur suddenly and unexpectedly.

For all-day trips, you'll need food and water. Some boats sell food and discourage coolers on board, others cheerfully make room for them. All allow you to bring simple snacks. Water will be available, but it's good to have a small bottle of your own; dry air and exercise both dehydrate you. And bring a book, a magazine or a deck of



DIFFERENT BOATS AND DIVEMASTERS HAVE DIFFERENT PROCEDURES. FIND OUT HOW THE BOAT OPERATES SO THAT EVERYONE IS PLAYING BY THE SAME RULES.



DIVING COURTESY OCEAN DIVERS OF KEY LARGO; MODELS, JOE ANGELO AND NIKI ANGELO



SECURING GEAR:
PLACE WEIGHTS ONLY
ON THE DECK AND
SECURE ALL OTHER
GEAR AT YOUR
ASSIGNED STATION.

cards—it can be a long ride to the dive site and back.

► **First In, Last Out** Pack your gear bag in order, so that what you'll need first is on top; there isn't room on the boat to scatter all your gear around the deck searching for your other bootie.

► **Keep It Dry** Pack your dry clothes separately, preferably in a waterproof bag, and find out where dry gear should be stored. Everything on a boat tends to get wet unless fiercely guarded.

Down to the Dock

On arrival at the boat you'll have to sign a release and show your C-card. The deck area aft (at the back of the boat) will be divided into a number of gear stations, one for each diver. This is your gym locker, where you'll store your gear and suit up. Are gear stations assigned, or should you choose one? Do tanks go in your gear station, or elsewhere? Is it OK to board now, or should you wait? Now's the time to ask. Then look for a cart to transport your gear to the boat.

► **Wear Your Gear** No cart? Wear your tank and BC assembled; it's easier than carrying them. Likewise, wear your weight belt. Save your back and your energy by making several trips; it's going to be a long day.

► **Pick Your Station** If you have a choice, pick one that's near your buddy's, sheltered from the wind, out of the way of traffic and near the entry door or the dive platform. (If you can achieve all that, buy a lottery ticket too; you're having a great day.)

► **Assemble/Secure Your Gear** Remember, the boat will be rockin' and rollin'. There will be some means of securing your tank, probably a bungee cord. Use it. Put weights on the deck, not on a bench where they can slide off.

► **Pop a Pill** Speaking of rockin' and rollin', if you're worried about seasickness start taking medication now; later, when

GETTING INTO THE WATER: CARRY YOUR FINS TO THE ENTRY POINT, AND PUT THEM ON WHILE STEADYING YOURSELF ON SOMEONE OR SOMETHING.



GETTING BACK ON BOARD: REMOVE YOUR FINS AND HAND THEM TO A CREW MEMBER, AND THEN CLEAR THE PLATFORM FOR THE NEXT DIVER.



you feel sick, can be too late. Eat something bland, like bread, crackers, a banana. Stay away from grease and doughnuts.

► Find a Bunk

Some boats, particularly those on the West Coast and in the Northeast, have bunks and allow you to load your gear the evening before the trip and sleep that night on the boat. Doing so allows you to start the day well rested. If bunks are available, find out if they are assigned or on a first-come basis. And talk quietly; other divers are trying to sleep.

The Voyage Out

On the way out to the dive site, the boat's captain or mate will give a short talk on the rules of the boat, how to use the marine toilets, the day's weather forecast, etc. Pay attention, and ask questions. In fact, don't be reluctant to admit to the captain or divemaster that this is your first boat dive; he'll keep a friendly eye out for you. He realizes that you're the customer and wants you to be happy. If he doesn't, you've learned something valuable when it comes time to book your next dive trip.

► **Feeling Queasy?** Stop reading that magazine, get into the fresh air, and fix your eyes on a stationary object on the horizon. If the urge becomes imperative, surrender to it; you'll feel better immediately. Use the boat's rail, on the downwind side near the stern. Don't use the toilets, a trash can or the camera tank. And don't feel embarrassed; you're not the first (see "The Diver's Scourge," *RSD*, April '97).

► **Dress Early** Give yourself plenty of time to dress and gear up carefully. That way, you'll feel confident instead of rushed, and you'll be less likely to forget your weight belt or fail to start your dive computer.

► **Keep It Together** Keep all your gear in your station. Make room for other divers trying to walk by. Check your buddy's gear at his station, not at the entry door.

Into the Water

Once the anchor is down, the divemaster will give an orientation to the dive site

Call Ahead

Questions To Ask Before Your First Domestic Day Boat Trip

In tropical destinations, you're usually in vacation mode: Show up at the dock with your gear and worry about your tan. But domestic day boats generally require longer rides and thus more preparation on your part. If it's your first time on a particular boat, it's wise to call ahead and ask:

- Is there a compressor, or do I need spare tanks? How many?
- Is food sold on board? What kind? What about hot drinks?
- Can I bring a cooler?
- When can I board the boat?
- Are there bunks?
- You do have my reservation, don't you?

and explain the procedure for entering and leaving the water. Typically, you'll enter the water one at a time through a door on one side of the boat or from a swim platform at the stern, paratrooper style. The divemaster will check your gear quickly, take your name or number, and OK you to enter. But different divemasters and boats have different procedures, and it's important that everyone follows the same rules, so pay attention.

► **Hold On** Gear up fully at your station,

but carry your fins to the entry door. You are top-heavy and a boat at anchor sometimes rolls unexpectedly, so as you stagger to the door hang on to something. Be careful with spearguns.

► **The Giant Stride** Is your air on? (It's surprising how many divers forget.) Wait until the previous diver clears the area and the divemaster gives the OK. It's often a long way down, so inflate your BC no more than one-quarter to halfway and hold onto your mask. Don't jump with a camera or speargun; instead, ask a crew member to hand it to you from the stern platform. Once in, clear the area immediately for the next diver, then perform your pre-dive check.

Back to the Boat

During your first dive, try to keep in mind where the boat is. Use your compass and natural landmarks for a sense of direction, and don't let the current carry you too far away—you don't want a long surface swim back to the boat. Typically, you'll board the boat by pulling yourself onto the partly submerged platform at the stern. There should be a crew member to help you.

► **Don't Crowd** Wait on the current line for your turn to mount the platform. The procedure will be one diver, or two, at a time.

► **Don't Chase** The boat may swing one way and then another on its anchor. Don't chase it; wait for the boat to bring the platform back to you.

► **Keep Clear** The platform moves with the weight of the boat behind it, so keep it at arm's length until you're ready to move onto it. Do not let it come

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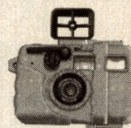
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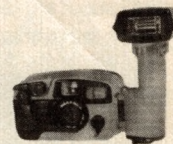
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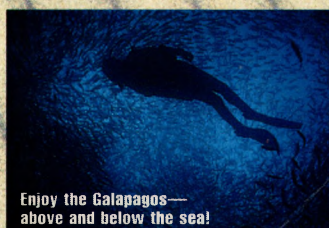
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down on top of you. In rough water, wait for the platform to submerge, then quickly pull yourself onto the center of it.

► **Fins Only** On the platform, take off only your fins (if you haven't already) and toss them onto the boat or hand them to a crew member, then clear the platform for the next diver. Anything else you remove is likely to be swept off the platform. Walk to your station (carefully) and only then take off your tank and weight belt.

Between Dives

After preparing your gear for the next dive, you have three tasks: stay warm, take on fuel and rest. Most divers remove or peel away at least some of their exposure suit in order to get dry. Wind can chill a wet diver even in the warm tropics. Your goal is to return your body to its pre-dive temperature. Many boats sell hot coffee, tea and cocoa.

► **More Air** On boats with compressors, you usually signal your request for an air fill by removing your regulator from the tank and/or hanging some kind of tag supplied by the boat on the tank's valve. On boats without compressors, you'll need to change tanks. Do this now, before you start relaxing.

► **Eat, Eat** You need calories for both warmth and energy. On some boats the galley is pay-as-you-go; on others you'll run a tab until the end of the trip. Bring your own fruit, bagels, granola bars, etc. (see "Snack Wells," RSD, June '96). Greasy burgers are not the best fuel, and they don't comfort a nervous stomach.

► **Keep It Dry** Some boats permit wet exposure suits in the lounge/galley area, others try to keep those areas dry. Find out the rules for the boat you're on before entering the cabin.

► **Camera Care** There's usually a special place, often a freshwater rinse tank, for storing cameras between dives. That keeps them away from flying weight belts. Do not use a camera rinse tank for your mask or anything else.

► **Don't Clean Game** Don't gut fish until other divers have left the water. Put your spear in the designated place, where it's less likely to impale other divers. Don't take game at all unless you have proper licenses and know local regulations. Returning dive boats are frequently inspected, and

Ship Tips

Gratuities are not included in the price of most dive trips. Standard procedure is to give the boat captain 10 to 15 percent of the total cost to split among the crew. After all, these are the people who fill your tanks, help you with your gear, get you where you're going and, most importantly, look out for your safety.

the captain will not appreciate you turning his vessel into a crime scene.

Après Dive

While some boats offer three and even four dives a day, many experienced divers will not try to do all of them. Your exhilaration may urge you on, but if you're at all fatigued it's better to end the day's diving one tank early than one tank late. Put away your gear, change and rest.

► Put Your Toys Away

Mom was right. Break down your gear and pack it now, before you change into dry clothes and get comfortable.

► **Wash and Dry** Many boats offer freshwater showers, but the water supply is usually limited. Don't hog the shower, and don't use it to rinse your gear. Some even have hot tubs, where the same rule applies.

► **Pay Your Bill** You'll be expected to pay your galley tab before the boat returns to the dock. You did remember to bring cash, didn't you?



► **Rest** It helps you off-gas nitrogen. Besides, you've still got to hump your gear to the car.

CIRCLE NO. 124 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Equalizing Made Easy

Pain-proof your ears with this natural and chemical guide to descents and ascents.

► By **SAMUEL SHELANSKI, M.D.**

If you're a diver, rest assured that you will have trouble equalizing your ears at some point. Blame poor planning on evolution's part. When we evolved from sea dwellers to land dwellers, somebody forgot to take into account that we might want to go back on vacation. The result is that we have pressure-sensitive spaces in our ears that have important implications for every descent and ascent we make.

What Happens When You Equalize?

As you descend, the air filling your ear's internal spaces is compressed and its pressure reduced. But outside your ears the pressure applied by water against your ears increases. To bring these two pressures into balance, and to prevent damage to your ear's tissues and organs, you must add air via your eustachian tubes to these internal spaces.

What Happens When You Don't?

A squeeze, defined as ear pain on descent, is the most common medical complaint from divers. The sharp pain occurs when water pressure forces the eardrum inward toward the unequalized air space in your middle ear. Continuing down despite the pain results in blood and other fluids filling the air space, eventually reducing the pain and producing a "full" feeling in the ear. Failure to equalize properly on descent, especially a fast one, can also rupture the eardrum or the round window leading to the inner ear.

Equalization Techniques

Most divers use the *Valsalva maneuver*—blowing gently against a pinched nose. The key word here is "gently." Blowing too hard can shut the eustachian tube's opening and damage the middle and inner ears. If you have to blow hard, ascend a few feet and try again—gently.

The *Frenzel maneuver* is similar in that you also compress air against a pinched nose, but you do so by swallowing or otherwise contracting your throat muscles, instead of using your diaphragm.

Other methods include yawning (with mouth closed) or pressing your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Which method will work for you is a matter of experimentation. Most divers gradually evolve away from sole use of the Valsalva and toward more gentle methods like the Frenzel.

Why You Must Equalize Early and Often

The opening of the eustachian tube is called the ostium. It functions like a pressure-sensitive valve. Very sensitive. Even small pressure changes equivalent to a change in depth of 2.5 feet is enough to cause the ostium to close. After about four feet, the ostium is essentially locked shut. Swallowing won't open it and a hard Valsalva maneuver will actually shut it even tighter. At this point the ear's membranes will be getting inflamed, with possible leakage of fluid into the middle ear. Most divers will experience a significant degree of pain at this point.

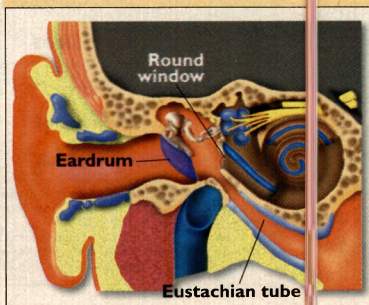
Why Do I Have Trouble Equalizing?

There are several factors that can lead to difficulty in clearing your ears and increase your risk of injury. These include the usual suspects: mucus from nasal congestion due to a cold or allergies; swelling from a sore or irritated throat; and narrowed eustachian tubes, often the result of scarring in people with a history of ear infections. Temporomandibular joint problems can contribute to difficulty equalizing by causing irritation that can occlude the eustachian tubes.

But even healthy divers may occasionally experience difficulty equalizing. After repeated and rapid depth changes, the throat muscles can tire. Absence from diving for a long period can leave a diver with rusty equalizing techniques. Equipment can be the culprit, too: tight neck seals on dry suits and cold-water hoods can constrict the throat and the eustachian tubes.

The 5 Golden Rules of Equalizing

- 1.** Equalize immediately upon beginning a descent and continue to do so every few feet to avoid discomfort.
- 2.** Never wait until discomfort is felt before equalizing.
- 3.** If you have trouble equalizing, ascend slightly and try again. If after repeated attempts you still can't equalize, abort the dive.
- 4.** If you have trouble equalizing, use a line to help control your descent and maintain a feet-down position.
- 5.** Never attempt a lengthy or forceful Valsalva maneuver. You may rupture your eardrum or round window.



What Is a Reverse Squeeze?

A reverse squeeze, or ear pain on ascent, occurs when expanding air in your ear's inner spaces can't escape via the eustachian tubes. It happens most frequently to divers with nasal congestion who manage to equalize adequately on descent, but whose eustachian tubes become blocked during the dive. If you rely on a decongestant to clear your eustachian tubes and the decongestant wears off during a dive, you can also experience a reverse squeeze.

The pain is similar to that of a squeeze, but is caused by the pressure inside the middle ear spaces being greater than the ambient pressure, forcing the eardrum outward instead of in. Techniques for handling a reverse squeeze are also similar: descend slightly until the pain is relieved and gradually attempt to ascend again. You can also attempt a reverse equalization technique: inhaling against a pinched nose. Attempting to surface despite the pain can also result in rupture of the eardrum.

My Ears Hurt After Diving—Should I Dive Again?

Not until the ear is pain-free. If you have pain, then it is a pretty sure bet that the membranes in the ear and eustachian tube are swollen and inflamed, which will make equalizing that much more difficult on subsequent dives. You may need to skip a day or two of diving, but that sure beats the alternative: risking more severe damage. If the eardrum or round window is ruptured, then there should be no further diving until the damage is completely healed, which may require surgical intervention.

It may be difficult to give up a day or two of diving due to ear pain, especially when you've just shelled out a couple of thousand dollars and taken a week of precious vacation time. But it is important to use good judgment and keep things in perspective. Taking a day or two to relax, snorkel and off-gas may not be why you went on a dive vacation, but it sure beats permanent hearing loss.

Will Ear Drops Help or Hurt?

Possibly both. Many divers use ear drops to reduce the irritation, inflammation and potential infection that can accompany frequent immersion of the ears in water. The ear canal is protected by a thin layer of cerumen, or wax, which has a slightly acidic pH. Water can dissolve some of the fatty acids that make up cerumen and make the ear canal more alkaline and therefore susceptible to bacterial infection.

Drops that contain 2 to 3 percent acetic acid seem to work best for drying out the ear canal and as a prophylactic against infection. For proper and effective prophylaxis, drops should be used after each dive. Drops that contain alcohol will help eliminate water in the ear, but can irritate the skin of the canal, especially if it is already inflamed.

If you suspect that your external ear is already infected, then these drops will generally not help. It is important to seek medical attention to determine whether it is the

external or middle ear which is infected, and receive the proper antibiotic therapy. This is especially true if you have drainage from your ear or think that you may have ruptured your eardrum. If the drum is ruptured, then drops can actually make the situation worse by washing bacteria from the outer ear into the middle ear space. 

Questions for Dr. Shelanski should be addressed to RSD, Dive Medicine, 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405; e-mail: RSDmgzn@aol.com.

Breathe Right: Common Drugs for Divers				
GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAME	SIDE EFFECTS	OTC?	COMMENTS
PILL DECONGESTANTS				
PSEUDOEPHEDRINE	SUDAFED, SUDAFED 12 HOUR	ANXIETY, PALPITATIONS	YES	GOOD GENERAL DECONGESTANT; SAFE FOR DIVERS; MUST BE USED 30 TO 45 MINUTES BEFORE DIVING
PHENYLPROPANOLAMINE	CORICIDIN, ALLEREST	PALPITATIONS	YES	LESS WIDELY USED THAN SUDAFED; FEWER PROBLEMS WITH NERVOUSNESS
SPRAY DECONGESTANTS				
OXYMETAZOLINE	AFRIN, DRISTAN 12 HOUR, NEO-SYNEPHRINE MAX STRENGTH	REBOUND CONGESTION AFTER STOPPING USE	YES	FAST-ACTING; GOOD FOR NASAL AND SINUS CONGESTION; SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR MORE THAN 3 OR 4 DAYS CONSECUTIVELY
PHENYLEPHRINE	NEO-SYNEPHRINE	AS ABOVE	YES	SHORT-ACTING; OK FOR THE OCCASIONAL DIVE
SEDATING ANTIHISTAMINES				
CHLORPHENIRAMINE	CHLOR-TRIMETON	DROWSINESS	YES	FOUND IN MANY SINUS AND ALLERGY PREPARATIONS; NOT RECOMMENDED FOR USE ON THE DAY OF DIVING BECAUSE OF SEDATIVE SIDE EFFECT
CLEMASTINE	TAVIST	DROWSINESS	YES	AS ABOVE
DIPHENHYDRAMINE	BENADRYL	DROWSINESS	YES	AS ABOVE
HYDROXYZINE SEDATIVE	ATARAX	DROWSINESS	NO	AS ABOVE
NONSEDATING ANTIHISTAMINES				
ASTEMIZOLE	HISMANAL	MINIMAL	NO	THESE RELATIVELY NEW DRUGS HAVE FEW SIDE EFFECTS AND ARE EXCELLENT FOR DIVERS WHO HAVE ALLERGIC RHINITIS. SOME OF THESE DRUGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN A SINGLE PILL IN COMBINATION WITH SUDAFED
LORATADINE	CLARITIN	MINIMAL	NO	AS ABOVE
FEXOFENADINE	ALLEGRA	MINIMAL	NO	AS ABOVE
INHALED STEROIDS				
BECLOMETHASONE	VANCENASE, BECONASE	MULTIPLE SIDE EFFECTS WITH LONG-TERM USE	NO	INHALED STEROIDS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY POPULAR OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS TO HELP PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC NASAL AND SINUS CONGESTION. THESE DRUGS HAVE HELPED MANY PEOPLE FOR WHOM OTHER MEDICATIONS DIDN'T WORK. THEY ARE AVAILABLE BY PRESCRIPTION ONLY; MUST BE UNDER AN M.D.'S SUPERVISION
BUDESONIDE	RHINOCORT	AS ABOVE	NO	AS ABOVE
FLUTICASONE	FLONASE	AS ABOVE	NO	AS ABOVE
FLUNISOLIDE	NASALIDE	AS ABOVE	NO	AS ABOVE
TRIAMCINOLONE	NASACORT	AS ABOVE	NO	AS ABOVE
There are countless other preparations on the market that bill themselves as sinus or allergy pills. Essentially all of them are combinations of drugs listed on this chart, and their side effects will be that of the individual agents (i.e., Sudafed and Benadryl) make you tired and anxious). Almost all of the over-the-counter (OTC) medications are available in a regular strength (4 hr.) and extra-strength (12 hr.). In general, I recommend the longer-acting agents on multi-dive days to prevent problems from the drug's effects wearing off under water. For the occasional diver, or the two-dive morning, the shorter-acting agents are acceptable.				

W

hen you sit down to plan your next dive vacation, wouldn't it be nice if you had all the info you needed right at your fingertips? No searching through back issues, trying to find 800 numbers, thumbing through yet another pretty brochure adorned with palm trees?

We thought so, too. And it's that same urge to escape the creeping walls of our workaday lives, blow out of town and just dive our friggin' brains out, which led us to compile this, our fifth annual—

INTERNATIONAL DIVE



Turn the page and you'll find: ♦ Descriptions of the 69 most popular dive destinations on the planet, including weather, water temp and vis, getting there and maps of the best dives. ♦ Reader Ratings—the compilation of more than 9,500 travel report forms you sent to us ranking a destination's strong points and weak ones. ♦ Dive operators worldwide, including their contact and booking info, best buy packages and what makes each unique. ♦ A guide to dive travel specialists—the people who get you there and back. ♦ And every live-aboard dive boat we could rustle up, because if you're anything like us, you want your nitrogen in very large doses. **Go for it.**

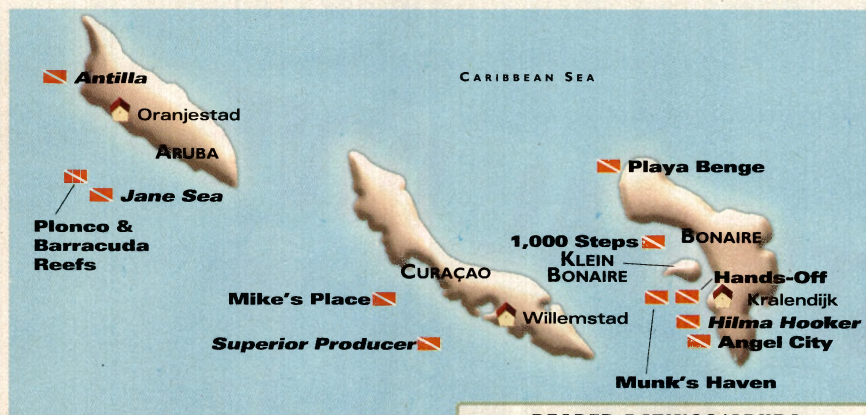
Prices: All prices in this directory are reported in US\$ unless otherwise noted. Prices should be confirmed before booking.

Additional packages may be available through dive travel specialists and other sources.

Sources: Information was supplied by individual dive operators and dive travel specialists. RSD is not responsible for the accuracy of the information submitted by operators or their agents.

Reader Ratings: Rating forms were included in past issues and available to all subscribers, postage-paid.

WORLDWIDE LISTINGS



ABCs/Aruba

The nondiving world knows Aruba as an international jet-set island of luxury high-rises and high-rolling casinos. Savvy divers know it as the one of the best collections of diveable shipwrecks in the Atlantic/Caribbean region, ranked behind only Bermuda in our 1997 Readers' Choice Top 100 survey.

Weather

Traversed by trade winds, Aruba is dry and sunny year-round with winter temps rarely below 75F and summer temps rarely above 85F.

Average Water Temp

An average 80F in summer with winter dips to 75F.

Visibility

Ranges from 50 to 100 feet depending on currents and plankton blooms.

Getting There

American, Air Aruba and ALM airlines offer a variety of nonstop and connecting flights from U.S. gateways, including New York's JFK, Miami, Newark, N.J., Baltimore, Atlanta, Tampa and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Diving

The flagship of Aruban wreck diving is the 400-foot *Antilla*, a fish-filled freighter that sank in 60 feet of water in 1940. The line between wreck and reef blurs on a dive to the *Jane Sea*. The encrusted freighter rests in 90 feet of water near Plonco and Barracuda reefs, considered to be the island's best.

READER RATINGS/ARUBA										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
QUALITY OF WRECKS										82.2
BEGINNER DIVING										81.0
ADVANCED DIVING										77.8
PHOTOGRAPHY										76.0
VALUE										75.8
SNORKELING										72.8
FISH LIFE										68.8
HEALTH OF REEFS										68.8
SHORE DIVING										55.8
QUALITY OF WALLS										51.8

DIVE OPERATORS

Aruba Pro Dive

Pontón 90, Oranjestad, Aruba, (011) 2978-25520, fax (011) 2978-37723 **Dives** ► South coast, Rocky Beach, Baby Beach, Dos Chiquito reefs, west coast wrecks, including the *Antilla*, *Debbie II* and airplanes. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to small groups, all levels of instruction, underwater photography, no deposit required on equipment. **Booking offices** ► Bucuti Beach Resort (011-2978-31100), Costa Linda Beach Resort (011-2978-38000), GWU Travel (617-449-5460), TNT Travel (617-262-9200). **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 6 1-tank dives, \$1,709 (sgl. occ.), \$945 (dbl. occ.); 4 nights, 3 1-tank dives, \$960 (sgl. occ.), \$530 (dbl. occ.); 3 nights, 2 1-tank dives, \$715 (sgl. occ.), \$395 (dbl. occ.). **Resort affiliation** ► Costa Linda Beach Resort.

Aruba Scuba Center

Ade Musset Str. #1, Oranjestad, Aruba, (800) 845-3483, (011) 2978-21596, fax (011) 2978-21596 **Dives** ► All of the popular dive sites around Aruba, especially the south coast reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Small operation gives personal attention to small groups (8-9 divers max.) on a 33-foot boat. **Best buy** ► All-inclusive resort packages available; diving extra. **Resort affiliation** ► Bushiri Resort.

Dax Divers Aruba

Kibaima 7, Aruba, (011) 2978-51270, fax (011) 2978-67271 **Dives** ► All sides of Aruba. **What sets them apart** ► Has an instructor/trainer on staff, nitrox facility, caters to small groups.

Mermaid Sport Divers

Juan Irausquin Blvd., Punta Brabo, Aruba, (011) 2978-35546, fax (011) 2978-35546, e-mail: mermaid@mail.setar-net.aw, internet: www.olmco.com/aruba/mermaid.html **Dives** ► Aruba's south and west sides, the *Antilla*. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, free transportation, 38-foot dive boat, PADI, NAUI and IDD instruction, full retail and rental. **Best buy** ► 8 dives including tanks and weights, \$199; unlimited one-week diving package, \$245. **Resort affiliation** ► Manchebo Beach Hotel.

Native Divers Aruba

Koyari #1, Noord, Aruba, (011) 2978-68763, fax (011) 2978-68515 **Dives** ► South coast reefs and wrecks, west coast wrecks and *Antilla* night dive. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to small groups, personal service, flexible schedule.

Pelican Watersports

Box 1194, L.G. Smith Blvd. 66, Oranjestad, Aruba, (011) 2978-31228, fax (011) 2978-32655 **Dives** ► Aruba's south and west coasts. **What sets them apart** ► Complete and extensive dive schedule. **Booking office** ► East Coast Divers (800-649-3483).

Red Sail Sports Aruba

J.E. Irausquin Blvd. 83, Palm Beach, Aruba, (800) 255-6425, (011) 2978-61603, fax (011) 2978-66657, e-mail: redsail@setar-net.aw, internet: www.redsail.com **Dives** ► Entire west shore of Aruba, including wrecks, reefs and coral slopes. **What sets them apart** ► Full-service operation, towels and iced tea on boat, scooters available, kayaking offered, video services, three locations. **Best buy** ► \$214 per person includes accommodations at Stauffer Hotel for 3 nights, 4 days, 2 days of 2-tank diving. **Resort affiliations** ► Hyatt, Marriott, Sonesta and Americana.

Scuba Aruba

Palm Beach Box 4100, Noord, Aruba, (011) 2978-66690, fax (011) 2978-61066 **Dives** ► Various wrecks and reefs around Aruba. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to all skill levels, PADI staff, specializes in first-time divers, resort courses. **Best buy** ► 4 dives, equipment included, \$120.

Unique Sports of Aruba

J.E. Irausquin Blvd. #79, Oranjestad, Aruba, (011) 2978-60096, fax (011) 2978-60096 **Dives** ► South and west coast wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Attention to service, different dive sites daily, no crowded boats, accommodates all levels of experience. **Booking offices** ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Go Go Tours, KJ Dive Adventures (800-450-2084 or 218-722-2084), Dolphin Holidays/Caribbean Hospitality Services (800-345-2782 or 954-427-5488), PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ► Packages vary. Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ► Aruba Palm Beach Resort & Casino.

ABCs/Bonaire

Bonaire is proof that God is a diver. Perfectly designed for easy shore diving, the sloping wall of the leeward west shore starts in 20 feet of water and just 35 yards from shore. Dive sites are marked on most road maps, and by yellow roadside markers. Load up the car, drive to your favorite site, and wade in for unhurried diving at your own pace and profile. Dive operators do offer boat trips to remote northern and southern sites, as well as the near-pristine diving of uninhabited Klein Bonaire.

Decades of active marine conservation have helped preserve the island's reefs as it has grown in popularity with begin-

BONAIRE

ners and experts alike. Little wonder that RSD readers rated Bonaire the top Atlantic/Caribbean destination in our 1997 Readers' Choice survey.

Weather

Swept by trade winds, Bonaire is an arid, sunny island with winter temps rarely below 75F and summer temps rarely above 85F.

Average Water Temp

An average 80F in summer with winter dips to 75F.

Visibility

Ranges from 60 to 100 feet, depending on currents and plankton blooms.

Getting There

Regularly scheduled service is available to Bonaire from U.S. gateways, though many flights require you to make a stopover or to change planes in Aruba or Curaçao. Air Aruba and ALM airlines offer flights from Newark, N.J., Baltimore, Atlanta, Miami, Tampa and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Diving

Sample it all from shallow spur-and-groove formations at Playa Benge, to deep sloping walls at 1,000 Steps. The island's biggest wreck dive, the *Hilma Hooker*, rests between parallel ridges of coral, a complement to sites like Angel City. Klein Bonaire has similar reef features with their own unique twists, like sponges glowing fluorescent at Munk's Haven and the underwater sandfall at Hands-Off.

READER RATINGS/BONAIRE

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
SHORE DIVING											96.8
PHOTOGRAPHY											95.0
BEGINNER DIVING											93.2
SNORKELING											91.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											90.4
VALUE											88.6
ADVANCED DIVING											88.0
FISH LIFE											85.4
QUALITY OF WALLS											78.0

DIVE OPERATORS

Black Durgon Inn/Scuba Center

Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-5736, fax (011) 5997-8846 **Dives** ▶ All moored sites around Bonaire plus special locations, including east side. **What sets them apart** ▶ Noncommercial atmosphere, reef wall directly off property. **Booking office** ▶ Bonaire Tours USA (800-526-2370). Call or fax 011-5997-8846 for customized package rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Black Durgon Inn.

Blue Divers/Palm Studios

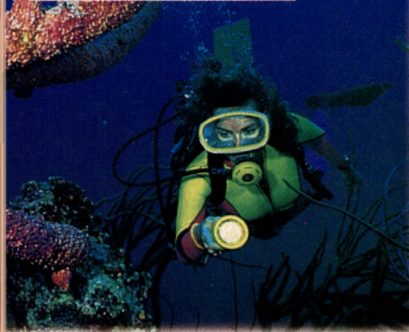
Kaya Carlos, A. Carlito Nicolas, Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-6860, fax (011) 5997-6865 **Dives** ▶ Guided shore dives to all sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ 25 years experience, small, personal dive operation. **Booking office** ▶ Great Southern Adventures (601-353-7559). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days, unlimited air, \$330 per person, dbl. occ.

Bon Bini Divers Bonaire

Kaya Gobernador N. Debot #90, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-5425, fax (011) 5997-4425, e-mail: bon-



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BONAIRE

Antilles, (011) 5997-5425, fax (011) 5997-4425, e-mail: boninidiv@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Bonaire Marine Park, Klein Bonaire and the southern tip of the island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, instructional courses, including more than 20 specialties, guided snorkeling program, multilingual staff. **Booking office** ▶ Caribbean Dive Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 6 days of unlimited shore diving, 6 boat dives (day or night), \$205 per person. Hotel packages available, call for details. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Lions Dive Hotel.

Buddy Beach & Dive Resort

Kaya Gov. N. Debrot #85, Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-5080, fax (011) 5997-8647, e-mail: bud dydive@worlddive.com, internet: www.buddydive.com **Dives** ▶ All of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, Caribbean Dive Tours, Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures, Rothschild Dive Safaris. **Best buy** ▶ \$772 per person includes 8 days, 7 nights, in oceanfront apartment, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, car rental, continental breakfast, transfers, room and car tax. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Buddy Beach & Dive Resort.

Captain Don's Habitat

P.O. Box 88, Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 327-6709, (011) 5997-8290, fax (011) 5997-7346, e-mail: divebudda@aol.com, internet: www.interknowledge.com/bonaire/habitat **Dives** ▶ All listed sites on Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ "Home of Diving Freedom," first to offer nitrox on Bonaire, training through instructor. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas. **Best buy** ▶ Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Capt. Don's Habitat.

Carib Inn

J.A. Abraham Blvd. #46, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-8819, fax (011) 5997-5295, e-mail:

75317.667@compuserve.com **Dives** ▶ All of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small resort, personal service, diver-dedicated. **Best buy** ▶ Call for hotel/dive packages. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Carib Inn.

Dee Scarr/Touch the Sea

Kralendijk, Bonaire, (011) 5997-8529, fax (011) 5997-8527 **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, offers specialty courses.

Dive Bonaire

J.A. Abraham Blvd., Kralendijk, Bonaire, (800) 367-3484, (919) 419-3484, (011) 5997-8285, fax (011) 5997-8238 **Dives** ▶ Klein Bonaire, north and south Bonaire, Washington-Slagbaai National Park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Fleet of 6 36-foot boats, camera tables and rinse barrels, freshwater showers, different dive sites on request. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, PADI Travel Network, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Divi Resort.

Dive Inn Bonaire N.V.

PO Box 362, Kralendijk, Bonaire, (011) 5997-8761, fax (011) 5997-8513 **Dives** ▶ Bonaire Marine Park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, multilingual staff, caters to small groups, 24-hour shore diving, guided snorkeling program. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Great Southern Island Adventures. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bonaire Caribbean Club.

Great Adventures at Harbour Village

Box 312, Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 868-7477, (011) 5997-7500, fax (011) 5997-7507, e-mail: harbourvil@aol.com, internet: www.harbourvillage.com **Dives** ▶ All available moorings on leeward side of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire, except Washington-Slagbaai Park.

What sets them apart ▶ Offers small groups, high staff-to-guest ratio, stresses comfort, safety and amenities for guests. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, First Class Resorts (800-424-0004 or 305-567-9509), Go Go Tours. **Best buy** ▶ Hotel/dive packages available. Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Harbour Village.

Photo Tours

Kaya Utrecht 16, Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-5390, fax (011) 5997-8060, e-mail: JerrySchna@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Bonaire and Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ Photography and video services, specialize in photo and video instruction, custom photo dive boat. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Capt. Don's Habitat.

Sand Dollar Dive & Photo

Kaya Gob. Debrot 79, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-5252, fax (011) 5997-7690, internet: www.interknowledge.com/bonaire/sanddollar **Dives** ▶ Bonaire, Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ Kayak diving, multilingual instructors, guided snorkeling, fish ID courses, children's classes. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Caribbean Dive Tours, Go Go Tours. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sand Dollar Condominium Resort.

Sunset Beach Dive Center

Box 92, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5997-8330, fax (011) 5997-8330 **Dives** ▶ West coast of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ▶ Multilingual staff, all boat captains are PADI instructors. **Booking office** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours. **Best buy** ▶ "Bonanza Package" until Dec. 15: 6 days, 6 boat dives, 1 night boat dive, unlimited shore diving, airfare from Miami, \$869. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sunset Beach Hotel.

The Plaza Resort Bonaire/ Toucan Diving

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Hotel Representative MADURO DIVE FANTA-SEAS

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CURAÇAO

ing.com **Dives** ► All sites on Bonaire, Klein Bonaire. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to both large and small groups, remote sites, 12 divers max. per boat, unlimited shore diving, guided snorkel trips, PADI and IDD instruction and classroom facilities. **Booking office** ► Travel Marketing Services (800-766-6016). **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 6 days of unlimited shore diving, transfers, taxes and service charges, \$555 per person (July, August and Thanksgiving week blacked-out on promo). **Resort affiliation** ► The Plaza Resort Bonaire.

ABCs/Curaçao

The social, political and commercial center of the Netherlands Antilles, Curaçao is a good vacation island for diver/nondiver couples. Topside, the island offers a mix of nightlife, recreation and shopping worthy of any jet-set island. Below water, it offers divers a mix of Bonaire-style sloping walls with Aruba-style wrecks.

Weather

Arid and sunny with winter temps rarely below 75F and summer temps rarely above 85F.

Average Water Temp

An average 80F in summer with winter dips to 75F.

Visibility

Ranges from 50 to 100 feet depending on currents and plankton blooms.

Getting There

Nonstop service is available to Curaçao from New York's JFK and Miami.

Diving

Topping the list of Curaçao's wreck dives is the sunken freighter *Superior Producer*, with a maximum depth of 110 feet. A deep reef dive to *Mike's Place* is a visit to a black forest jungle complete with orange elephant ear sponges and massive barrel sponges.

READER RATINGS/CURAÇAO

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
SHORE DIVING											82.4
PHOTOGRAPHY											82.2
ADVANCED DIVING											81.4
HEALTH OF REEFS											80.0
VALUE											78.6
BEGINNER DIVING											78.0
SNORKELING											75.4
QUALITY OF WALLS											72.4
FISH LIFE											71.6
QUALITY OF WRECKS											61.4

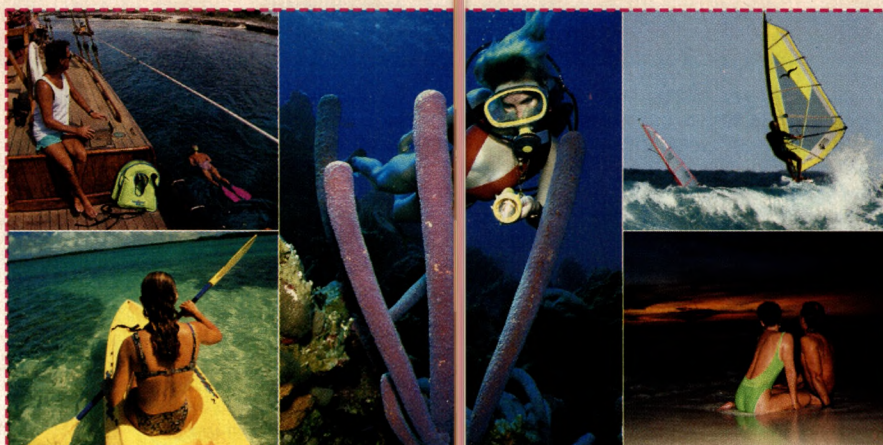
DIVE OPERATORS

Aqua Diving Curaçao

Martha Koosje #4, Weg naar Westpunt, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5999-864-9700, fax (011) 5999-864-9288, e-mail: dive@aquadiving.com, internet: www.aquadiving.com **Dives** ► West side of island. **What sets them apart** ► Specializes in shore diving. **Best buy** ► 1 week unlimited shore diving, 1 night and 1 wreck dive, \$103-\$172 per person; accommodations including transfers, rental car, \$306 per person, dbl. occ. per week.

Atlantis Diving NV & II NV

Atlantis Diving NV: Drielstraat 6, Curaçao, Netherlands



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CIRCLE NO. 33 ON THE READER SERVICE CARD

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CIRCLE NO. 35 ON THE READER SERVICE CARD

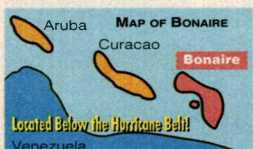


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CIRCLE NO. 38 ON THE READER SERVICE CARD

CURAÇAO

Antilles, (011) 5999-4658288, fax (011) 5999-4658288; **Atlantis Diving II NV: John F. Kennedy Blvd. z/n, Curaçao**, (011) 5999-4626200, fax (011) 5999-4628099, e-mail: diving@cura.net internet: www.iseeyou.com/atlantis-diving **Dives** ▶ West coast, Klein Curaçao, wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 locations, personal service, small groups, boat trips to Klein Curaçao, pick-up service. **Booking offices** ▶ Does Travel (011-31-70-346-8250), Roozoo Diving Tours (011-31-20-6992212). **Best buy** ▶ Unlimited air and weights, \$80 per week; 2-tank boat dives, \$55; PADI open-water course, \$272; animal encounters, \$55.

Coral Cliff Diving

Coral Cliff Hotel & Resort, St. Martha Bay, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5999-2642822, fax (011) 5999-2642237 **Dives** ▶ Mushroom Forest and Cave, Big Sponge, west side of Curaçao. **What sets them apart** ▶ Quiet and relaxed diving, only operator on west side of island, personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Island Holidays Inc., Scuba Tours (201-256-9115). **Best buy** ▶ 10 dives, unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, \$235. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Coral Cliff Resort.

Diving School Wederfoort

Bocaweg 93, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5999-8884414, fax (011) 5999-8692062.

Habitat Curaçao

Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 327-6709, (305) 438-4222, e-mail: maduro@netpoint.net, internet: www.curaeotourism.com/habitat. **Dives** ▶ Southwest coast of Curaçao. **What sets them apart** ▶ 24-hour unlimited shore diving. **Booking office** ▶ Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, accommodations, daily buffet breakfast, transfers, taxes, service charges, gratuities, 12 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, airfare from Miami, \$941 per diver, \$662 per nondiver. **Resort affiliation** ▶

Habitat Curaçao.

Lions Dive

Bapor Kibra, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (888) LIONS-DIVE, (011) 5999-4618100, fax (011) 5999-4618200, e-mail: lionsdiv@ibm.net **Dives** ▶ Underwater park, East Point. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, custom programs. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Caribbean Dive Tours, PADI Travel Network. **Best Buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days diving, breakfast, tax, \$690 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Lions Dive Hotel Curaçao.

Ocean Divers Curaçao

Socratesstraat 15B, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5999-4657254, fax (011) 5999-4657254.

Peter Hughes Princess Divers

Dr. M.L. King Blvd., Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 9-DANCER, (011) 5999-658991, fax (011) 5999-655756, e-mail: dancer@winnet.net, internet: www.winnet.net/dancer/ **Dives** ▶ Entire southwest coast of Curaçao. **What sets them apart** ▶ Focus on service, quality of boats, nitrox, teach and work with handicapped divers. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Princess Beach Resort & Casino.

The Plaza Hotel Curaçao/ Toucan Diving

Plaza Piar, Willemstad, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 766-6016, (011) 5999-4612500, fax (011) 5999-4616543, e-mail: vdvalk@ibm.net **Dives** ▶ Curaçao's south coast of the underwater park and sites from east to west at Banda Abau. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shore diving, dive safaris, boat dives, dive survivals, and a 60-foot catamaran. **Booking offices** ▶ Vandervalk Tours (011-31-1724-85151), Vandervalk Travel (011-31-344-630302), Travel Marketing Services, Ltd. (800-766-6016). **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ The Plaza Hotel Curaçao.

Seascape

Curaçao Caribbean Hotel & Casino, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5999-4625000, fax (011) 5999-4625846 **Dives** ▶ Curaçao's south coast, including shipwrecks and airplane wrecks, and wall, cave, reef, drift and night dives at more than 40 sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experience and a dedicated, multilingual crew. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, PADI Travel Network or Scuba Holidays (312-929-2821). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Curaçao Caribbean Hotel & Casino.

Underwater Curaçao

Bapor Kibra, Z/N, Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, (888) 546-6734, (011) 5999-4618100, fax (011) 5999-4618200, e-mail: lionsdiv@ibm.net **Dives** ▶ National Underwater Park, Eastpoint, West Point and Klein Curaçao. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive-dedicated hotel, custom dive programs, 5-Star PADI/IDC Center. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Go Go Tours, PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, tax, fees, breakfast, \$690 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Lions Dive Hotel Curaçao.

Australia

It is the reef to which all other reefs on earth are compared. It's the only living thing visible from the moon, the longest reef system in the world and perhaps the most biologically diverse aquatic habitat on Earth. The Great Barrier Reef is 1,200 miles of coral ramparts, islets and cays that flank the east coast of Australia, and the biggest marine park in the world. If that's not enough to draw you to the land Down Under, consider the bommies of the Coral Sea, the great white sharks of the south coast and the gentle whale sharks of Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef.

Weather

The Australian summer runs from December to February, and winter is June through August. In the tropical north, daytime temperatures range from the 80Fs in winter to the 90Fs with high humidity in summer. In the south, temps range from the 70Fs in winter to the 80Fs in summer.

Average Water Temp

On the GBR, expect 80Fs in the summer, mid-70Fs in winter. Cooler in more southerly regions.

Visibility

Water inside the Great Barrier Reef is affected by tides and surge and averages 40 to 60 feet of visibility with an occasional high of 100 feet. Outside the reefs, visibility is usually a reliable 60 to 100 feet and can soar to 200 feet in the open Coral Sea.

Getting There

Air New Zealand, Qantas and United airlines fly a variety of routes from Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Diving

Off Townsville lies one of the greatest wreck dives in the world, the *SS Yongala*, a massive oasis of life on a sandy plain that hosts octopus, rays, 500-pound

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READER RATINGS/AUSTRALIA										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
FISH LIFE										91.8
PHOTOGRAPHY										90.6
HEALTH OF REEFS										89.8
ADVANCED DIVING										87.6
VALUE										87.4
SNORKELING										80.0
BIG ANIMALS										73.2
BEGINNER DIVING										72.4
QUALITY OF WALLS										69.2
QUALITY OF WRECKS										52.4

groupers and massive schools of jacks, snappers and sweetlips. Coral Sea reefs such as Osprey Reef are formed on the pinnacles of seamounts rising from oceanic depths. Osprey is a 10-mile-long oval atoll that offers diving on steep slopes, sheer walls, pinnacles and deep ledges. Off the North West Cape of Western Australia, Ningaloo Reef is quickly becoming a miniature Great Barrier Reef, attracting as many divers as it does whale sharks.

DIVE OPERATORS

NEW SOUTH WALES

Scuba Warehouse

Shop Parramell, 55 George Street., Parramatta, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia 2150, (011) 6126-891389, fax (011) 6128-912256, e-mail: 100405.3322@compuserve.com
Dives ▶ Sydney Harbor and Sydney's national parks.
What sets them apart ▶ Boat and shore diving, rental gear, divemaster services if requested. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Booking office** ▶ 2-day adventure weekend, 4 dives, \$AUS99; lunch 7.50 extra.

QUEENSLAND

Lizard Island Lodge

P.M.B. 40, Cairns, Queensland, Australia 4870, (800) 676-134 (Australia), (011) 6170-603999, fax (011) 6170-603991, internet: www.austresorts.com.au/sormliz.htm **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Cod Hole, Lizard Island.
What sets them apart ▶ Specializes in remote sites.
Resort affiliation ▶ Lizard Island Lodge.

Nautilus Scuba Centre

504 Lutwyche Rd., Lutwyche, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4030, (011) 6173857-1440, fax (011) 6173857-6141.
Dives ▶ Local reefs and wrecks, Great Barrier Reef, Solomon Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 20 years experience, emphasis on safety, 2 full-time course directors and instructor/trainers. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Travel Australia (011-6129-706311), Go Tours Holiday Shop (011-61755912199). **Best buy** ▶ 2 nights, 2 days on live-aboard, all meals, air, tanks, unlimited diving, \$250. Solomon Islands day trip, 2 dives and lunch, \$100.

Port Douglas Dive Centre

P.O. Box 105, Port Douglas, Queensland, Australia 4871, (011) 6170-995327, fax (011) 6170-995680, e-mail: portdoug@ozemail.com.au, internet: http://www.oze.com.au/~portdoug/pdvb.htm **Dives** ▶ Outer reef sites on the Great Barrier Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Fast, modern dive boats, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, full gear, \$188; 1 day of snorkeling, full gear, \$108.

Pro Dive Brisbane

Corner Milton and Baroona Rds., Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4064, (011) 6173-3683766, fax (011) 6173-3683025
Dives ▶ South end of Great Barrier Reef, Moreton Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star IDC facility, PADI course director on-staff, 2 retail dive centers, 45- and 24-foot boats. **Booking office** ▶ Pro Dive Travel (011-6122-649499). **Best buy** ▶ 2-day, 2-night live-aboard trip, 6 to 10 dives, all meals, \$150; day trip, 2 dives and lunch, \$60.

Quicksilver Diving Services

Marina Mirage, Port Douglas, Queensland, Australia 4870, (800) 387-8850, (011) 6170-995050, fax (011) 6170-994065, e-mail: quiki@internetnorth.com.au, internet: www.ozemail.com.au/~quik3 **Dives** ▶ Agincourt Reef, Great Barrier Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive trips to the outer Great Barrier Reef. **Booking office** ▶ Abel Tasman Tours (800-727-1626). **Best buy** ▶ 2-day certification packages available, call for rates.

Tusa Dive Connection

Corner Aplin St. and the Esplanade, Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (011) 6170-311248, fax (011) 6170-315221, e-mail: tusa@c130.aone.net.au, internet: www.abacus.com/mall/tusa/index.htm **Dives** ▶ More than 20 outer reef sites from Cairns. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 modern, high-speed vessels, caters to small groups, individual attention. **Booking office** ▶ Oz Dive. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 3 days of diving, \$AUS845 per person, sgl. occ.; \$AUS640 per person, dbl. occ., includes 2 dives per day, equipment rental, hotel transfers, lunch and morning tea.

VICTORIA

Dive & Outdoor

140 Ryrie St., Geelong, Victoria, Australia 3220, (011) 6152-213342, fax (011) 6152-214078, e-mail: www.dando@nc.com.au **Dives** ▶ Port Phillip Heads. **What sets them apart** ▶ J-Class submarine diving, wall diving. **Booking office** ▶ Dive Adventures (011-03-95342700). **Best buy** ▶ 5 days/4 nights, 10 dives, tanks and weights, meals and accommodations, \$490.

Bahamas

You could spend a lifetime getting to know the islands of the Bahamas and never fully succeed. Starting 55 miles across the Gulf Stream from Miami, this chain of 700 islands, islets and cays covers 90,000 square miles of prime Atlantic real estate. From the high-rise resorts and casinos of New Providence (Nassau), Paradise Island and Freeport, to the rustic charms of the Out Islands (the Abacos, Andros, Bimini, Cat Island, Crooked Island, the

BAHAMAS

Exumas, Eleuthera, Harbour Island, Long Island, San Salvador and Walker's Cay) you have no shortage of topside experiences and great diving to sample.

Weather

Summer temperatures average 85F; 75F in winter.

Average Water Temp

70Fs in winter, 80Fs in summer.

Visibility

Except during winter storms, visibility averages 80 to 100 feet.

Getting There

Bahamasair, the national carrier, offers three to five flights daily to Nassau (New Providence) and Freeport from Palm Beach, Orlando and Miami. Twice-weekly flights to popular Out Island destinations—including George Town, Exuma, San Salvador, Marsh Harbour (Abacos), Treasure Cay (Abacos), North Eleuthera and Governor's Harbour (Eleuthera)—leave from Miami. Delta, US Airways and American Airlines also fly to Nassau and some of the Out Islands. Pan Am Air Bridge offers seaplane service linking Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Bimini, Walkers Cay and Paradise Island twice daily.

Diving

Guaranteed animal dives with sharks, dolphins and stingrays thrill divers by the boatload at sites like New Providence's Shark Alley. On almost every island, reef diving ranges from shallow coral gardens like Cathedral off Marsh Harbour, to deep wall sites like the Continental Shelf Drift Dive off Bimini. Shipwrecks, from artificial reefs like Theo's Wreck off Freeport and the Bahama Mama off New Providence. The limestone islands and the surrounding seafloor are prone to collapse and the resulting sinks or blue holes, like the Andros Blue Hole and Eleuthera's inland blue hole The Sink, are another Bahamas



specialty that every diver should sample.

DIVE OPERATORS

ABACOS

Brendal's Dive Shop Int'l, Ltd.

Green Turtle Cay, Abaco Island, Bahamas, (800) 780-9941, (242) 365-4411, fax (242) 365-4411, e-mail: lori@estreet.net internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/brendals **Dives** ▶ Coral Caverns, Tarpon Dive, Sand Channels, San Jacinto wreck, Crain wreck, The Pillars, Hole in the Wall, Coral Gardens, Elkhorn Pack. **What sets them apart** ▶ Owner-operated, advanced certification, all-day dive, sailing cruise available, private charters, group rates. **Booking offices** ▶ Abaco Vacations (800-633-9197), Bahamas Travel Network (800-780-9941), Experience the Adventure (ETA), Go Go Tours (201-934-3859). **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 3 nights, \$297-\$346; 8 days, 7 nights, \$778-\$894; private charters and group rates available. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Green Turtle Club & Marina.

READER RATINGS/OUT ISLANDS

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											88.1
ADVANCED DIVING											87.0
VALUE											85.4
HEALTH OF REEFS											80.8
FISH LIFE											77.8
BEGINNER DIVING											77.0
SNORKELING											76.4
QUALITY OF WALLS											69.6
SHORE DIVING											67.6
BIG ANIMALS											63.1
QUALITY OF WRECKS											52.0

Dive Abaco

Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas, (800) 247-5338, (242) 367-2787, fax (242) 367-4779, e-mail: captain@internetfl.com, internet: www.internetfl.com/abaco.html. **Dives** ▶ The Cathedral, Grouper Alley, The Tunnels. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personally guided underwater tours, certifications. **Best buy** ▶ 4-night package, 3 days of 2-tank diving, air-conditioned room, \$340-\$448.

Great Abaco Beach Resort Dive Centre

Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas, (888) 478-3525, (242) 367-4646, fax (770) 287-7777 **Dives** ▶ Barrier reef, caves, Blue Hole. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI, CMAS, YMCA courses and check-outs, multilingual staff. **Booking offices** ▶ Bahamas Travel Network, Caravelle Travel (800-842-8476). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Great Abaco Beach Resort.

ANDROS

Small Hope Bay Lodge

Fresh Creek, Andros, Bahamas, (800) 223-6961, (242) 368-2013, fax (242) 368-2015, e-mail: shbinfo@smallhope.com, internet: www.smallhope.com **Dives** ▶ Walls, gardens and blue holes of the Andros barrier reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located on 140 miles of reef, 35 years experience, free introductory lessons, variety of diving, custom specialty dives, blue hole diving, snorkeling safaris, dolphin encounters, all-inclusive packages. **Booking office** ▶ Bahamas Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 8 days, beachfront cottage, all meals and beverages, 3 boat dives daily, taxes, service charges, transfers, use of hot tub, bikes, sailboards and sailboat, \$1,410 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Small Hope Bay Lodge.

BIMINI

Bahama Island Adventures

250 S. Beach St., Suite 202, Daytona Beach, FL 32114, (888) 329-1337, (904) 255-9962, fax (904) 255-9965, e-mail:

islife@sprint.com **Dives** ▶ All Bimini and Cat Cay sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Attention to customer service, convenience of dock. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days/2 nights, accommodations, airfare, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, breakfast and lunch, \$349.

Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea

Alice Town, Bimini, Bahamas, (800) 348-4644, (242) 347-3089, fax (242) 347-3079, e-mail: biminiaa@web2000.net, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/bua.htm **Dives** ▶ Bimini Islands south to Cat Cay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Owner/operators on-site with 15 years experience, wild dolphin excursions. **Booking office** ▶ Bimini Undersea Reservations Inc. (800-348-4644 or 305-653-5572). **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, accommodations, 21 dives, from \$683.

Scuba Bimini

1100 Lee Wagener Blvd., Suite 102, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315, (800) 848-4073, (954) 359-2705, fax (954) 359-2707, e-mail: scubabimini@wisenet.com, internet: www.quantumleap.net/sb/ **Dives** ▶ Bimini Islands, Victory Reef and Tuna Alley. **What sets them apart** ▶ Fast jet dive boat, professional staff. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 8 dives, \$447, includes night boat dive, round-trip airfare from Ft. Lauderdale,

READER RATINGS/BIMINI

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
VALUE											87.8
ADVANCED DIVING											84.0
PHOTOGRAPHY											84.0
FISH LIFE											82.8
HEALTH OF REEFS											80.4
BEGINNER DIVING											79.8
SNORKELING											73.4
BIG ANIMALS											69.4
QUALITY OF WALLS											63.4
QUALITY OF WRECKS											62.8

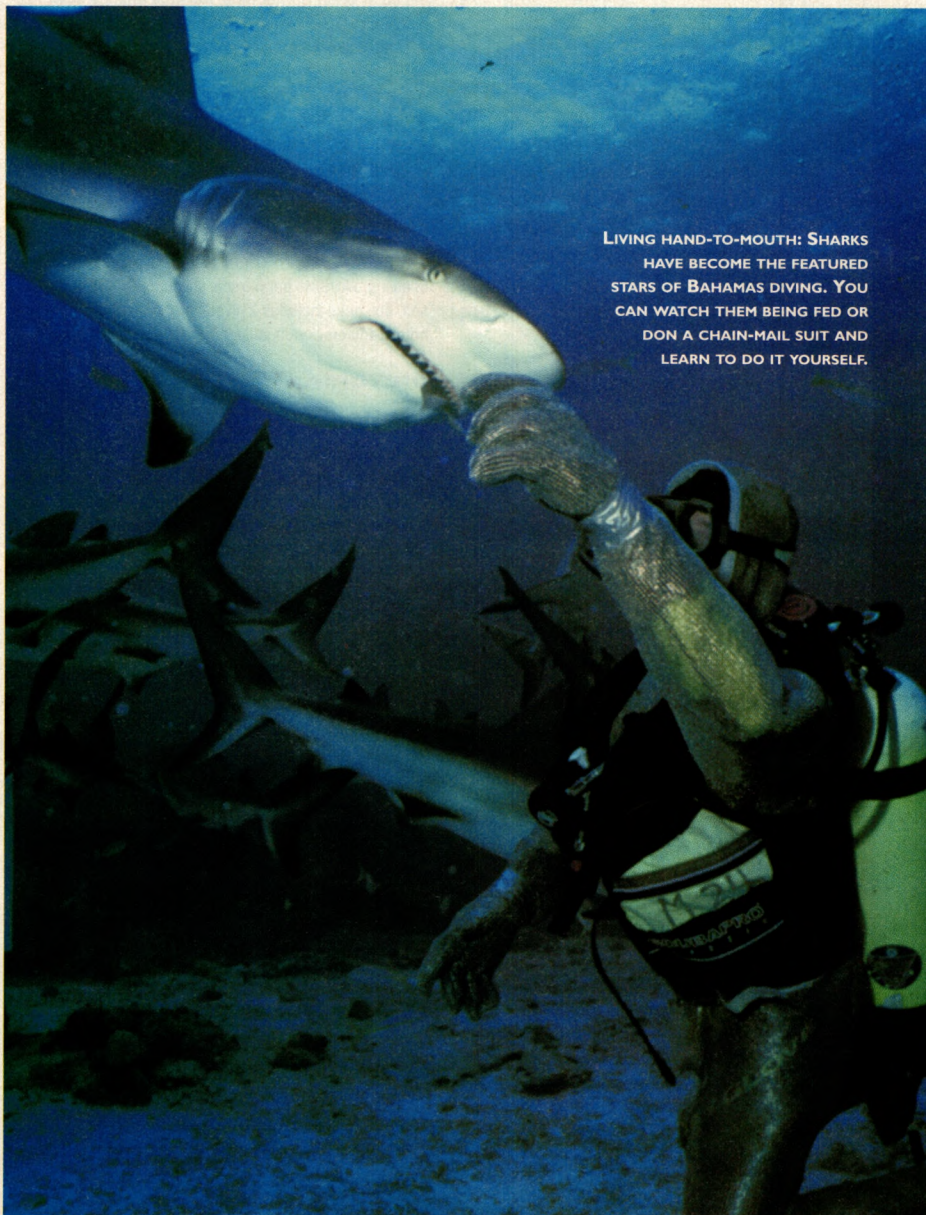
taxes and transfers, breakfast and lunch.

CAT ISLAND

Cat Island Dive Center

Cat Island, Bahamas, (242) 342-3053, fax (242) 342-3053 **Dives** ▶ South side of Cat Island and Tartar Bank. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, relaxed atmosphere, picnics between dives. **Booking office** ▶ Water-House Photo Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days of 2-tank

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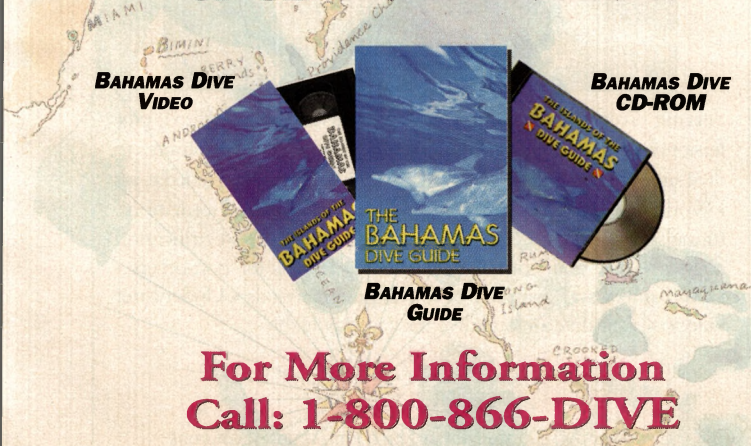


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dolphins, wrecks, sharks, blue-holes, incredible marine life and more. We have dive operators ready to help you discover our diversity. Call 1-800-866-DIVE to receive our FREE 1997 BAHAMAS DIVE GUIDE, DIVE GUIDE VIDEO or CD-ROM DIVE GUIDE for your PC Computer. And remember, why crisscross the Caribbean to find the world's great dive destinations? *Just come to The Islands of The Bahamas.*

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Bahamas Diving Association Dive Operators:

ABACO	BRENDAL'S DIVE SHOP	800-780-9941
	DIVE ABACO	800-247-5338
	SPANISH CAY DIVING	242-365-0083
	WALKER'S CAY UNDERSEA ADVENTURES	800-327-8150
ANDROS	SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE	800-223-6961
BIMINI	BIMINI UNDERSEA ADVENTURES	800-348-4644
CAT ISLAND	GREENWOOD DIVE CENTER	242-342-3053
ELEUTHERA/HARBOUR ISLAND	ROMORA BAY CLUB	242-333-2323
	VALENTINE'S DIVE CENTER	800-383-6480
EXUMA	EXUMA FANTASEA	242-336-3483
GRAND BAHAMA/FRI PORT	THE UNDERWATER EXPLORERS SOCIETY	800-992-DIVE
	XANADU UNDERSEA ADVENTURES	800-327-8150
LONG ISLAND	STELLA MARIS RESORT	800-426-0466
NEW PROVIDENCE/NASSAU	BAHAMA DIVERS	800-398-DIVE
	DIVE DIVE DIVE	800-368-3483
	DIVER'S HAVEN	242-393-0869
	DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS	242-327-5066
	NASSAU SCUBA CENTRE	800-327-8150
	STUART COVE'S DIVE SOUTH OCEAN	800-879-9832
	SUN DIVERS	800-258-4786
	SUNSKIFF DIVERS	800-331-5884
SAN SALVADOR	RIDING ROCK INN	800-272-1492
LIVE-ABOARD DIVE BOATS	BLACKBEARD'S CRUISES	800-327-9600
	BOTTOM TIME ADVENTURES	800-234-8464
	NEKTON DIVING CRUISES	800-899-6753
	OUT ISLAND VOYAGES	800-241-4591
	SEA DRAGON	954-522-0161
	SEA FEVER DIVING CRUISES	800-443-3837
	THE DREAM TEAM	800-741-5335

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BAHAMAS

boat dives, unlimited shore diving, \$1,050.

Fernandez Bay Dive Shop

Cat Island, Bahamas, (800) 940-1905, (242) 342-3043, fax (242) 342-3051, e-mail: fbv@batelnet.bs **Dives** ► Walls surrounding Cat Island. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to small groups, personal service. **Booking office** ► (800) 940-1905, fax (305) 474-4864. **Best buy** ► 7 days/6 nights, 2 dives/day, taxes and gratuities, \$927.50 to \$1,555. **Resort affiliation** ► Fernandez Bay Village.

EXUMAS

Exuma Fantasea Ltd.

P.O. Box 29261, Georgetown, Exuma, Bahamas, (800) 771-1133, (242) 336-3483, fax (242) 336-3483 **Dives** ► Reefs, blue holes and caverns of the Exumas. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to small groups, personal service, max. 8 divers on boat, PADI instructors, reef ecology taught on dives. **Booking office** ► Bahamas Travel Network.

GRAND BAHAMA

Grand Bahama Scuba

PO Box F42809, Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, (800) 753-7282, (242) 373-9791, (242) 373-6775, fax (242) 373-9792, e-mail: gbscuba@batelnet.bs **Dives** ► The southern shore of Grand Bahama and various island and cavern sites. **What sets them apart** ► Emphasis on marine ecology and identification courses, caters to technical wreck divers. **Best buy** ► 10 dives, including reef fish ID course, \$235. **Resort affiliation** ► Ocean Reef Yacht Club.

Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO)

Freeport, Grand Bahama, (800) 992-DIVE, (954) 351-9889, fax (954) 351-9740 **Dives** ► Shark Junction, Theo's Wreck,

READER RATINGS/GRAND BAHAMA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											85.4
ADVANCED DIVING											81.2
BEGINNER DIVING											80.4
BIG ANIMALS											80.0
VALUE											80.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											73.8
SNORKELING											72.2
FISH LIFE											71.8
QUALITY OF WRECKS											66.0
QUALITY OF WALLS											53.0

Ben's Caverns, Grand Bahama reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Wreck and reef diving, diving with dolphins and sharks, more than 30 years experience. **Best buy** ► 7 days, 6 nights, 9 dives, breakfast daily, \$484 per person, dbl. occ.

Xanadu Undersea Adventures

PO Box 21766, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335, (800) 327-8150, (954) 462-3400, fax (954) 462-4100, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/xanadu.htm **Dives** ► Theo's Wreck, Shark Alley and Sea Gardens. **What sets them apart** ► Dive shop on premises, up to four dives a day on packages. **Booking office** ► Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ► 5 days, 4 nights, room taxes, 3 2-tank dives, \$376; airfare available. **Resort affiliation** ► Xanadu Beach Resort.

HARBOUR ISLAND

Romora Bay Dive Shop

PO 146, Harbour Island, Bahamas, (242) 333-2323, fax (242) 333-2500, e-mail: jfox@cpsnet.com **Dives** ► North

Eleuthera and eastern shore, and Harbour Island. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, caters to small groups, large boats. **Best buy** ► 1 week accommodations, 1 dive daily, discounted rates for additional dives, breakfast and lunch, use of watersports equipment, \$1,050-\$1,600. **Resort affiliation** ► Romora Bay Club.

Valentine's Dive Center

Box 1, Harbour Island, Bahamas, (800) 383-6480, (242) 333-2309, fax (242) 333-2309, e-mail: vdc@batelnet.bs **Dives** ► Harbour Island, north Eleuthera, inland sinks and caves, "Current Cut" drift dive. **What sets them apart** ► Offers personalized cave and cavern diving, resort classes for children. **Booking office** ► Kentucky Diving Headquarters. **Best buy** ► 4-day package, 3 free dives and 1 night dive, \$489, includes airfare from Ft. Lauderdale. **Resort affiliation** ► Valentine's Yacht Club & Marina.

LONG ISLAND

Stella Maris Resort Club

Long Island, Bahamas, (800) 426-0466, (242) 338-2051, fax (242) 338-2052, e-mail: longisl@ix.netcom.com **Dives** ► Lee and northwest side of Long Island and Conception Island Wall. **What sets them apart** ► Wreck and shark diving, only operation on Long Island, 30 years experience, client-oriented diving. **Best buy** ► 7-night package, all meals, airfare from Florida or Nassau, 6 days of diving, \$1,399. **Resort affiliation** ► Stella Maris Resort.

NEW PROVIDENCE

Bahama Divers

Nassau Yacht Haven, East Bay St., PO Box 555004, Nassau, New Providence, (800) 398-3483, (242) 393-1466, fax (242) 393-6078, e-mail: bahadiver@bahamadivers.com internet: empg.com/bahama.divers **Dives** ► Blue Hole, area wrecks,

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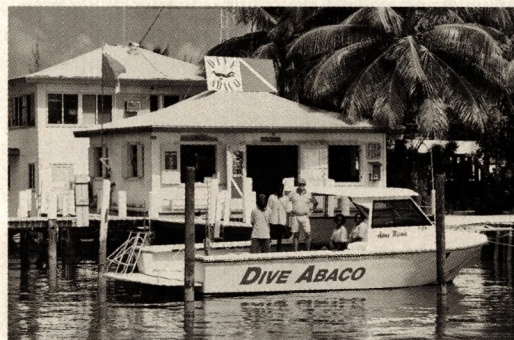
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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

walls and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Transportation from hotels, underwater videos of your dive, guided dives, freshwater rinse on every boat, gear handling. **Booking offices** ▶ Lorraine's Tours (612-797-7777), Caribbean Reservations (800-398-3483). **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, from \$849; 4 days, 3 nights, from \$344.

READER RATINGS/NEW PROVIDENCE										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING										83.8
BEGINNER DIVING										82.6
PHOTOGRAPHY										82.2
VALUE										79.8
FISH LIFE										76.6
HEALTH OF REEFS										75.2
BIG ANIMALS										75.0
QUALITY OF WALLS										74.8
SNORKELING										70.2
QUALITY OF WRECKS										68.2

Dive, Dive, Dive, Ltd.

Nassau, New Providence, (800) 368-3483, (242) 362-1401, fax (242) 362-1994, internet: www.divedivedive.com **Dives** ▶ Tongue of the Ocean, Shark Alley and James Bond wreck. **What sets them apart** ▶ Bahamas' first nitrox training facility, tri-mix and rebreathers available. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days/7 nights, 6 days of 2-tank diving, villa, transfers, continental breakfast, \$860 per person.

Dive Nassau

Bay and Deveau St., PO N620, Nassau, Bahamas, (242) 356-5170, fax (242) 323-8426 **Dives** ▶ Shipyards, Paradise Cay, Fish Hotel, Blue Hole, various other sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Professional staff, clean boats, don't mix divers and snorkelers. **Best buy** ▶ 6 dives, \$145.

Diver's Haven

East Bay Street, Nassau, New Providence, Bahamas, (800) 684-DIVE, (242) 393-0869, fax (242) 393-3695, e-mail: divers@bahamas.net.bs, internet: bahamas.net.bs/diverhaven. **Dives** ▶ Wrecks, reefs, blue holes and walls around New Providence. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive and snorkel tours, scuba instruction for Atlantis Resort and Casino, Breezes SuperClubs and Marriott's Nassau Beach Hotel. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 2 nights, \$272 per person, dbl. occ., at Breezes SuperClubs.

Dolphin Encounters Unlimited

P.O. Box CB10977, Nassau, Bahamas, (242) 327-5066, fax (242) 327-5059, e-mail: stm@bahamas.net.bs **Dives** ▶ Blue Lagoon Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dolphin encounters, scuba program coming in summer 1997. **Booking office** ▶ Reservations booth, (242) 363-4324. **Best buy** ▶ Swim with dolphin, \$85-\$115; dolphin encounter, \$30-\$40.

Nassau Scuba Centre

PO Box 21766, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335, (888) 962-7726, (954) 462-3400, fax (954) 462-4100, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/nassau.htm **Dives** ▶ Tongue of the Ocean, Shark Arena. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers variety of hotel packages, chain mail, shark feeding, all-inclusive packages. **Booking office** ▶ Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights at Casuarinas of Cable Beach Hotel, \$344 includes room, 3 2-tank dives, continental breakfast, taxes and gratuities, transfers; airfare available.

Point of View

PO Box CB-11850, Nassau, Bahamas, (242) 362-4611, fax (242) 368-2670 **Dives** ▶ Andros Island, Bahamas.

Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean

PO Box CB-13137, Southwest Bay St., Nassau, Bahamas,

(800) 646-3333, (242) 362-4171, fax (242) 362-5227, e-mail: scove1045@aol.com internet: www.stuartcove.com **Dives** ▶ Southwest side of New Providence, Tongue-of-the-Ocean, wrecks, movie sets, shallow reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ "Shark Adventure," "Wall Flying" and "Rebreather Adventure," full-service photo and video lab. **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 3 nights, 2 days diving, \$327 per person includes hotel taxes, gratuity and a 2-tank morning reef dive (until Dec. 21). **Resort affiliation** ▶ South Ocean Golf & Beach Resort.

San Divers, Ltd.

Nassau, New Providence, (242) 325-8927, fax (242) 393-1600 **Dives** ▶ East side of New Providence. **What sets them apart** ▶ Certifications, referrals, resort courses. **Booking office** ▶ Dive Reservation Services (800-258-4736 or 305-489-7725).

Sunskiff Divers

Nassau, New Providence (800) 331-5884, (242) 362-1979, fax (242) 362-1979 **Dives** ▶ South side of New Providence, Blue Hole off Andros, Exuma charters available. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Call (800) 331-5884 for details and reservations. **Best buy** ▶ Diving and lodging packages available.

SAN SALVADOR

Club Med/Columbus Isle

San Salvador, Bahamas, (800) CLUB-MED, (242) 331-2000, fax (242) 331-2458, internet: www.clubmed.com. **Dives** ▶ More than 40 sites around San Sal. **What sets them apart** ▶ Certifications, resort courses, referrals, recompression chamber and scuba doctor on-site. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days of 2-tank diving, 1 night dive, 3 meals daily, sports and lessons, entertainment, beer and wine, \$1,475. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Club Med Columbus Isle.

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READER RATINGS/SAN SALVADOR

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
QUALITY OF WALLS											89.4
VALUE											87.4
ADVANCED DIVING											87.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											85.4
HEALTH OF REEFS											82.4
BEGINNER DIVING											79.0
FISH LIFE											78.6
BIG ANIMALS											68.6
SNORKELING											68.0

**Riding Rock Inn
Resort and Marina**

Cockburn Town, San Salvador, Bahamas, (800) 272-1492, (954) 359-8353, fax (954) 359-8254 e-mail: ridingrock@aol.com. **Dives** ▶ Leeward and south ends of the island. **What sets them apart** ▶ More than 50 dive sites, specializes in local knowledge. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, accommodations, hotel taxes and gratuities, 3 meals/day,

READER RATINGS/WALKERS CAY

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											95.0
BIG ANIMALS											93.4
VALUE											92.2
ADVANCED DIVING											90.8
FISH LIFE											84.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											84.2
BEGINNER DIVING											80.0
SNORKELING											64.2
QUALITY OF WALLS											60.0
QUALITY OF WRECKS											54.6

transfers, 3 dives/day, \$1,050 deluxe, \$950 standard. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Riding Rock Inn Resort.

SPANISH CAYE

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and Watersports**

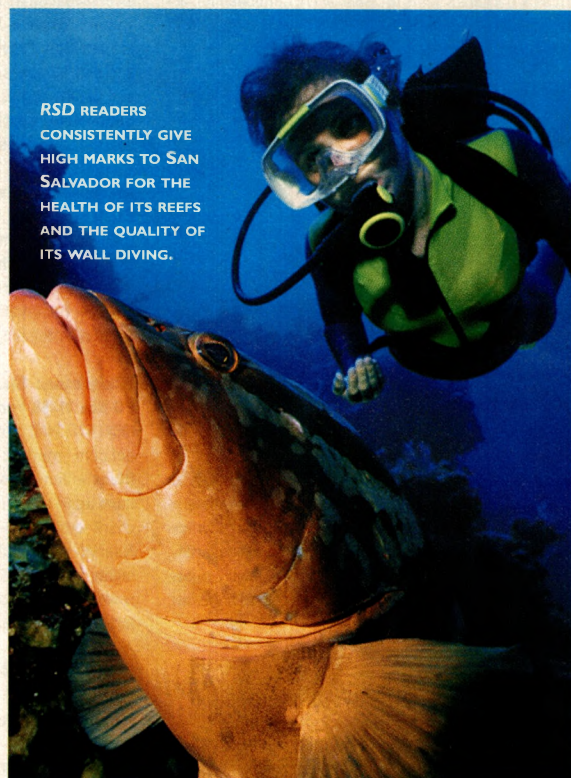
Bahamas, (800) 688-4752, (242) 365-0083, (242) 365-0083, e-mail: dupuch@bahamasnet.com, internet: www.bahamasnet.com **Dives** ▶ Spanish Caye. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers abundant marine life and Spanish galleon wrecks. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Spanish Caye Inn.

WALKERS CAY

**Walkers Cay
Undersea Adventures**

PO Box 21766, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335, (800) 513-5257, (954) 462-3400, fax (954) 462-4100, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/walkers.htm. **Dives** ▶ Northern Abacos, "Shark Rodeo," Flower Gardens, Spiral Cavern, Pirate's Cathedral. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located on private island, offers diving with 100-plus blacktip sharks. **Booking office** ▶ Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, round-trip airfare from Fort Lauderdale, transfers, deluxe room, breakfast and dinner daily, taxes and gratuities, 3

dives/day, shark dive, upgrade to PADI advanced open-water or free open-water qualifying dives. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Walkers Cay Hotel and Marina.



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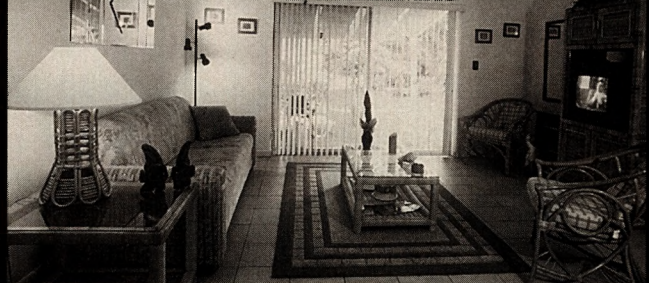
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Bay Islands, Honduras

Just offshore and a world away from mainland Honduras lie the four island groups of the Bay Islands. This ain't the same Central America you see in the movies—no mustachioed dictators, no gun-toting guerillas, no pigs and chickens roaming the streets. OK, maybe a few pigs and chickens. But the only uprisings going on here are divers ascending from a dive.

Our readers can't be wrong—you rated Utila second best value and sixth best destination overall, and Roatan fifth best shore diving and tenth best destination overall in the Caribbean region.

Weather

Mild year-round, seldom above 90F in summer or below 75F in winter.

Average Water Temp

Expect water temps in the low 80Fs in summer, high 70Fs in winter. Bring a dive skin or shorty at the very least.

Visibility

Summer is the best time to dive the Bay Islands, when the weather is driest and seas are flat, resulting in vis that peaks at 100 feet.

Getting There

TACA flies nonstop from Miami, New Orleans and Houston to Roatan and San Pedro Sula on the mainland, Honduras's industrial hub. Continental and American Airlines also have extensive Central American itineraries.

Diving

While many popular Caribbean destinations offer trademark critters and signature dives, the Bay Islands lack a recognizable mascot or gimmick. Here, diversity is key: from the wild **dolphin encounter** at Roatan's Institute for Marine Sciences to Guanaja's **Jado Trader**—the Bay Islands' most famous wreck—and from the **Pinnacle's** lush coral gardens off Utila to Cayos Cochino's protected marine sanctum at sites like Pelican Wall.

DIVE OPERATORS

CAYOS COCHINOS

Cayos Cochinos Undersea Adventures

PO Box 21766, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335, (800) 628-3723, (011) 504-42-0974, fax (011) 504-42-0974, e-mail: hkinett@hondutel.hm internet: www.tntgroup.com/div/index.html **Dives** ▶ Cayos Cochinos, Bay Islands, offshore seamounts. **What sets them apart** ▶ Private island, Pro 42 dive boat, exclusive dive operation for biological reserve. **Booking office** ▶ Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ \$895 per week includes accommodations, hotel taxes, 3 meals daily, 3 boat dives daily, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving; call for discount airfare. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Plantation Beach Resort.

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HOTEL AND MARINA
ABACO, BAHAMAS

MAY • 73

BAY ISLANDS



READER RATINGS/GUANAJA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											77.8
VALUE											76.6
ADVANCED DIVING											78.4
BEGINNER DIVING											76.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											75.8
QUALITY OF WALLS											73.6
SNORKELING											71.8
SHORE DIVING											69.0
FISH LIFE											60.8
QUALITY OF WRECKS											57.8

GUANAJA

Bayman Bay Club

Guanaja, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 524-1823, (954) 572-1902, fax (954) 572-1907, e-mail: reservations@baymanbayclub.com, internet: www.baymanbayclub.com
Dives ▶ Guanaja. **What sets them apart** ▶ Private bay and beach on lee side of island, kayaking, shore diving, nature trails, sunsets, every bungalow has a hammock. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, \$749 excluding holiday weeks. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bayman Bay Club.

Nautilus Dive Resort

Guanaja, Sandy Bay, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 566-6143, (206) 937-7484, fax (206) 933-8075, e-mail: divetrav@aa.net, internet: www.seattleweb.com/divetravel/r-honduras-nautilus.html **Dives** ▶ North and south coasts of Guanaja, Barbareta. **What sets them apart** ▶ Focus on hospitality. **Booking office** ▶ U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ▶ \$612 per diver includes 7 nights accommodations, 3 meals/day, 3 boat dives/day, 1 night dive/week, 1 afternoon dive, transfers, sales tax. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Nautilus Dive Resort.

Posada del Sol

Guanaja, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 642-3483, (561) 624-3483, fax (561) 624-3225, e-mail: posadadel@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Bay Islands. **Best buy** ▶ \$950, call for details. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Posada del Sol.

ROATAN

Anthony's Key Resort

Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 227-3483, (305) 666-1997, fax (305) 666-2292, e-mail: bahia@gate.net, internet: www.aventuras.com/anthony'skey **Dives** ▶ Northwest, west and south sides of Roatan. **What sets them apart** ▶ More than 25 years experience, emphasis on service and personal attention. **Booking offices** ▶ Bahia Tours, Landfall Productions, Roatan Charters, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, accommodations, diving, meals, activities, \$750 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Anthony's Key Resort.

Barbareta Beach Club

PO Box 72, Lemhi, ID 83465, (800) 252-6587, (208) 756-8246 e-mail: bbc@wilderness.com, internet: www.wildernessriver.com/barbareta. **Dives** ▶ Reefs of Barbareta, Bay Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Secluded resort. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days, \$1,295 per person includes 3 meals daily, 2 boat dives daily. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Barbareta Beach Club.

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GUANAJA - BAY ISLANDS - HONDURAS



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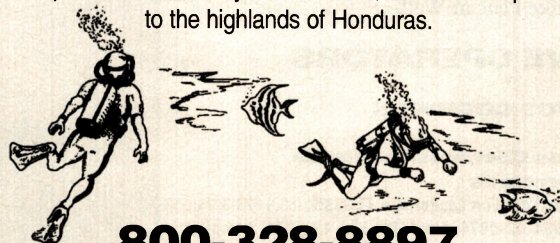
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READER RATINGS/ROATAN

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											88.0
QUALITY OF WALLS											88.2
ADVANCED DIVING											85.8
VALUE											85.6
HEALTH OF REEFS											83.6
BEGINNER DIVING											78.8
FISH LIFE											73.4
SNORKELING											72.8
SHORE DIVING											68.2

Bay Islands Beach Resort

Sandy Bay, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 4-ROATAN, (011) 504-45-1425, fax (011) 504-45-1855, e-mail: bibr@ns.gbm.hn **Dives** ▶ Roatan area, including West End, marine reserve, Spooky Channel. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to groups. **Best buy** ▶ Rent entire resort (up to 24 people) for \$12,395, or half resort (up to 12) for \$6,995. Includes 16 boat dives, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, all meals, transfers. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bay Islands Beach Resort.

Brick Bay Dive & Yacht Club

Brick Bay, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 535-DIVE, (011) 504-45-1127, fax (305) 559-0558 **Dives** ▶ Enchanted Forest, Connies Dream, and other wrecks and reefs off Roatan. **What sets them apart** ▶ Trips to Punta Gorda, picnics on beach, kayaks, sunset cruises. **Booking offices** ▶ Avanti Destinations (503-295-1100), Landfall Productions, A.I.T. (800-525-3833), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ \$450 per person plus 7% tax; some restrictions may apply.

Coco View

Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 282-8932, (352) 588-4131, fax (352) 588-4158, internet: roatan.com/honduras.htm **Dives** ▶ South side of Roatan. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dedicated dive operation, offers PADI certifications and specialties. 110-foot wall directly offshore. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Roatan Charters. **Best buy** ▶ \$800 per diver for 7 nights, includes two boat dives daily, unlimited shore diving day and night. **Resort affiliation** ▶ CoCo View Resort.

Fantasy Island Beach Resort

Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 676-2826, (011) 504-455191, fax (813) 835-4569 **Dives** ▶ Northern and southern shore of Roatan. **What sets them apart** ▶ Proximity to reef, own electricity plant, water treatment facility, shore diving. **Booking office** ▶ Experience the Adventure (ETA), Global Brazil Tours (Vancouver), Landfall Productions, SC Travel, Scuba Voyages, Tropical Adventures Travel, U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ▶ \$1,250 per person includes airfare from Miami, Houston or New Orleans, meals, 20 dives, 7 nights accommodations. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Fantasy Island Beach Resort Dive & Marina.

Inn of the Last Resort

Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 374-8181, (011) 504-45-1838, fax (011) 504-45-1848, e-mail: lastresort@globalnet.hn, internet: www.dive.com/innlast.html **Dives** ▶ Marine reserve off northwest coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal attention, diving in marine reserve. **Booking office** ▶ Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 3 boat dives/day, 3 meals/day, transfers, \$695 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Inn of the Last Resort.

Oak Bay Resort

Roatan, Bay Islands, (011) 504-45-2337, fax (011) 504-45-2337 **Dives** ▶ Roatan, Bay Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ All units have bottled drinking water and hot showers. **Best buy** ▶ 1 week unlimited shore diving, beachfront apartment, \$299; 5 nights, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving.

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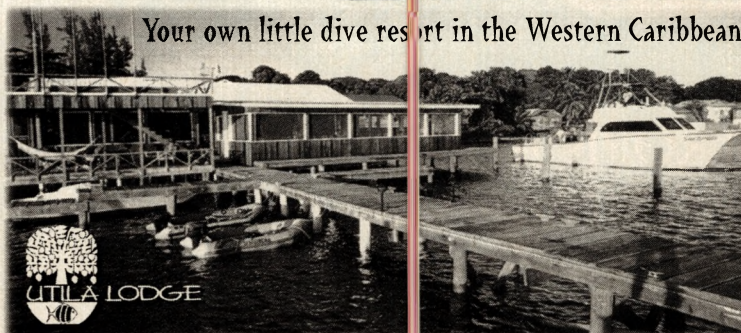
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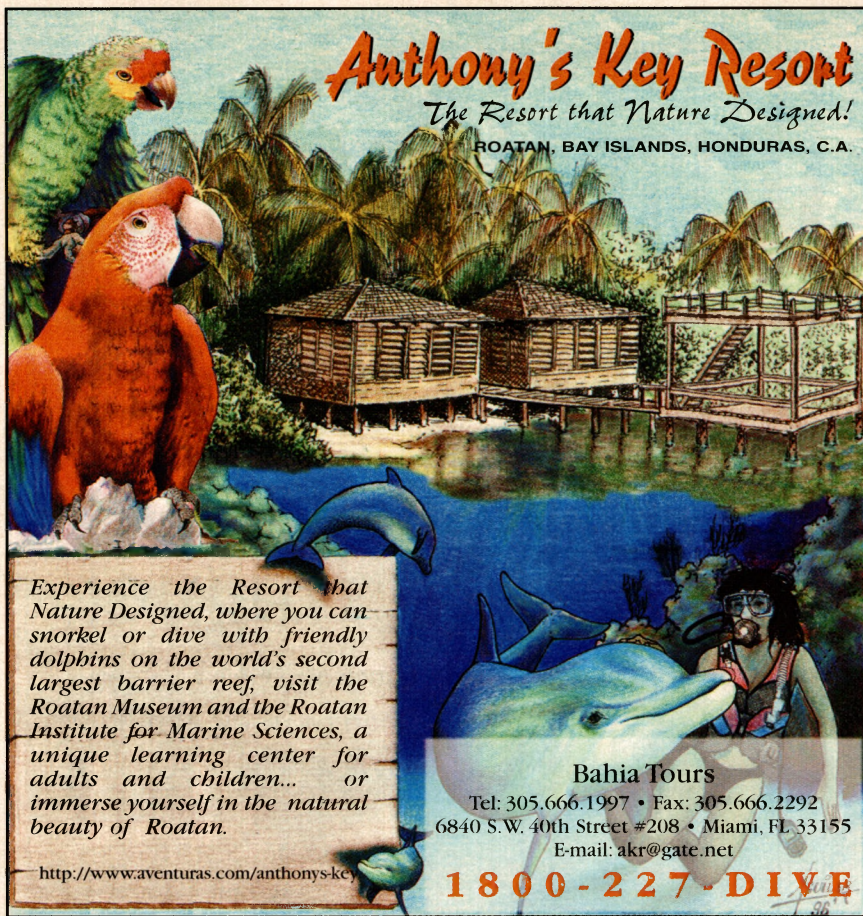
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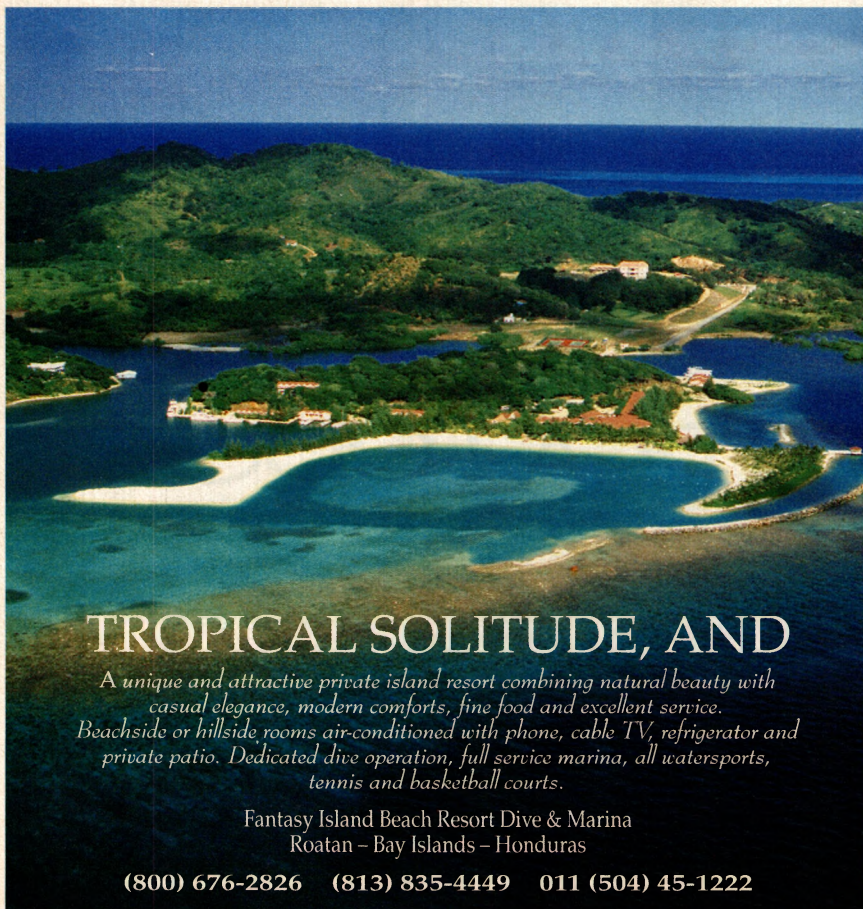
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BAY ISLANDS

ing, beachfront apartment, \$395; 7 nights, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, beachfront apartment, \$425. **Resort affiliation** ► Oak Bay Resort.

Oceanside Inn

Sandy Bay, Roatan, Bay Islands, (888) 661-6402, (011) 504-45-1552, fax (011) 504-45-1532 **Dives** ► West Bay Wall, Mary's Place, sites 10 minutes away. **What sets them apart** ► Family atmosphere, personal service. **Booking office** ► Bahia Tours. **Best buy** ► 10 dives, \$250.

Reef House Resort

PO Box 40331, San Antonio, TX 78229, (800) 328-8897, (210) 681-2888, fax (210) 733-7889 **Dives** ► Both shores of Roatan, Barbareta Island.

What sets them apart ► Wall dive accessible from stone jetty in front of resort. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, all meals, 2 boat dives/day, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, \$725 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ► Reef House Resort.

Sueño del Mar Divers

West End, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 298-9009, (011) 504-45-1717, fax (011) 504-45-1717 e-mail: stvdive@aol.com, internet: www.roatanet.com/sueno_del_mar **Dives** ► West End, Marine Park. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to small groups, large dive boats. **Booking office** ► Scuba Travel Venture (619-291-9085). **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, 5 days diving, 3 dives daily, 1 night dive, transfers, \$355.

UTILA

Laguna Beach Resort

Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 668-8452, (318) 893-0013, fax (318) 893-5024, e-mail: awhite@utila.com, internet: www.utila.com **Dives** ► Utila, Bay Islands, seamounts and wall dives off the continental shelf. **What sets them apart** ► Easy access to shore diving, fully self-contained with sea-recovery reverse osmosis water purification system and waterfront rooms, private beach front resort. **Booking offices** ► Utila Tours (800-66-UTILA), Roatan Charters (800-282-8932). **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, 3 meals daily, 2 night dives weekly, unlimited shore diving, airport transfer, \$795. **Resort affiliation** ► Laguna Beach Resort.

READER RATINGS/UTILA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
VALUE											90.8
PHOTOGRAPHY											88.2
ADVANCED DIVING											88.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											86.6
BEGINNER DIVING											81.8
FISH LIFE											79.6
QUALITY OF WALLS											78.2
SNORKELING											73.6
BIG ANIMALS											68.8
SHORE DIVING											62.6

Utila Lodge Resort/ Bay Islands College of Diving

Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras, (800) 282-8932, (011) 504-45-3143, fax (011) 504-45-3209, e-mail: ulodge@ns.gbm.hn, internet: www.roatan.com/utilalodge.htm **Dives** ► All sides of Utila Island, including walls, reefs, seamounts, pinnacles, swim-throughs. **What sets them apart** ► PADI 5-star facility, fast boats, personal service, E-6 processing, instruction, offshore and flats fishing. **Booking office** ► Roatan Charter (800-282-8932). **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 6 days, 6 days diving, 3 dives/day, 2 night dives/week, 3 meals/day, accommodations, \$750 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ► Utila Lodge.

Belize

In relation to the area it covers on the Caribbean coast of Central America, the tiny country of Belize seems unfairly blessed with natural abundance. This former British colony is home to primordial rain forests, over 180 miles of barrier reef and three of the Caribbean's four atolls. Dive Central for Belize is Ambergris Caye in the north, where the barrier reef turns to high-profile formations of canyons and tunnels. The trio of offshore atolls—Turneffe Islands, Lighthouse Reef and Glover's Reef—provide secluded dive resorts and miles of near-virgin reefs. And, in the south, Placencia Peninsula is the jumping-off point for a series of rare faro reefs and deeply undercut drop-offs.

Weather

During the summer, expect highs in the mid-80Fs and lows in the low to mid-70Fs. Winter is just a bit cooler, with highs in the low 80Fs and lows in the mid- to high 60Fs. Wet season stretches from June to November with the south getting twice as much rain as the north.

Average Water Temp

Consistently warm, from the high 70Fs in winter to the mid-80Fs in summer.

"HOLD MY CALLS"

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US:

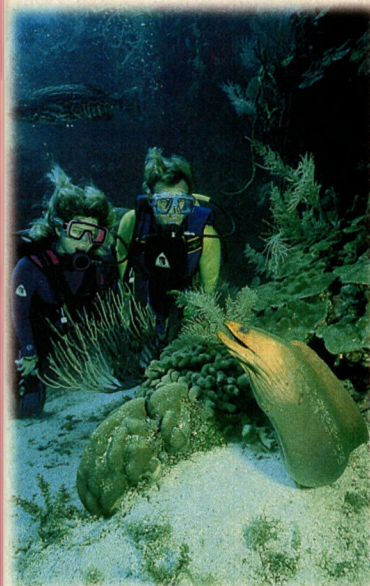
- "Top 5 Resort Rating"
- "Best dive vacation we ever had"
- "Wonderful, magnificent"
- "Great staff and service"
- "Blessed by Mother Nature"

WHAT WE SAY:

- Over 50% repeat guests
- Magnificent Spanish villa in tropical paradise
- Excellent service and great cuisine
- 4 Custom Dive Boats, Tennis, Freshwater Pool, Gym
- Great variety of diving—Walls, Pinnacles, Shipwrecks, Volcanic Caves
- Easy diving—5-20 minutes to dive sites



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CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Bay Islands Beach Resort

Escape to your own private dive resort



At the Bay Islands Beach Resort on Roatan, Ted and Cam O'Brien have created the perfect balance between a highly professional full-service dive operation and a laid-back, intimate bed-and-breakfast style dive resort. With only 24 - 38 guests each week, it is easy for them to adjust schedules, meals, and activities to their guests' desires. The resort's highly successful "Rent The Entire Resort" plan allows dive clubs, dive shops, group leaders and scuba instructors use of the resort's facilities and staff. An ideal place to take groups!

Bay Islands Beach Resort is 44 acres of panoramic waterfront and hillside within the Marine Reserve. A two-story Spanish-style plantation house and beach villas sit amidst beautifully landscaped property with fruit and nut trees, flowers, and towering coconut palms.

Just off the beach is the famous Spooky Channel, one of the best shore (and boat) dives on the island. Swim

through an eerie crack in the reef which opens onto the breathtaking wall. Or snorkel along the pristine reef and view the spectacular display of fishes and corals.

Eight-day packages include seven nights' air-conditioned accommodations, 16 boat dives (two in the morning, one in the afternoon, one night dive), unlimited shore dives and three delicious meals a day. Festivities featured are the Tabiyana Beach picnic trip, Land Crab Safari, the traditional lobster buffet and Limbo and Punta Party with music and dancing on the beach.

BOOK IT! Group leaders call for "Rent The Entire Resort" details. An individual seven-night package is \$725 pp/do; non-divers, \$650 pp/do. Call your local dive shop or Bay Islands Beach Resort toll-free at (800) 4 ROATAN or (561) 624-5774, fax (561) 624-7751.

CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

MAY • 77

Visibility

Water clarity varies, with the best visibility occurring in late spring and summer. On the barrier reef and atolls, you'll often find visibility of 100 feet or greater, but rough weather and plankton can lower it to 50 feet or less.

Getting There

Three airlines offer flights from the United States: American Airlines from Dallas/Fort Worth and Miami; Continental from Houston; and the Central American carrier Taca from Houston, New Orleans, Miami, Los

Angeles, New York and Washington.

Diving

Lighthouse Reef Atoll's Blue Hole is one of the most recognizable dive sites in the world—a deep blue circular opening nearly a

quarter-mile across the sandy seafloor. Inside, you'll find little marine life, but plenty to explore, including limestone ledges, overhangs and a monstrous cavern that features stalactites and stalagmites. At Ambergris Caye's Shark-Ray Alley, hungry nurse sharks and stingrays congregate in eight feet of water to be fed and fondled. At Murray Long Caye Drop-off, off Placencia, the coral heads rise from 80 feet to 50 feet to form swim-through canyons that parallel an abysmal 3,000-foot drop-off.

DIVE OPERATORS

Adventures in Watersports

Box 66, San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 648-8990, (011) 501-26-3706, fax (011) 501-26-3707 Dives ► San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Hol Chan, Blue Hole, Turneffe Island, Lighthouse Reef. **What sets them apart** ► 8 divers max. (larger groups by arrangement), first-aid and oxygen on board. **Booking office** ► That's the Ticket, (800) 648-8990

Amigos Del Mar

Box 53, San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (011) 501-26-2706, fax (011) 501-26-2648, e-mail: amigodive@btl.net Dives ► Ambergris Caye, Turneffe Atoll, Lighthouse Reef. **What sets them apart** ► All local divemasters. **Booking offices** ► Island Dreams, Sea & Explore (504-393-8920), Tropical Travel. **Best buy** ► \$80 per person, dbl. occ., per night, includes accommodations, 2 dives, tanks and weights. **Resort affiliation** ► Mayan Princess.

Belize Diving Services

Caye Caulker, Belize, (011) 501-22-2143, fax (011) 501-22-2217, e-mail: bzdiverserv@btl.net. **Dives** ► Barrier reef, Lighthouse, Blue Hole, Turneffe Atoll. **Booking office** ► BZ Travel Services.

Belize Undersea Adventures

P.O. Box 21766, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335, (800) 327-8150, (954) 462-3400, fax (954) 462-4100, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/belize.htm **Dives** ► Ambergris Caye, Shark-Ray Alley, Lighthouse Reef, Blue Hole. **What sets them apart** ► Dive shop on premises, overnight trip to outer islands, Mayan jungle excursions available. **Booking office** ► Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, room taxes and service charges, 5 2-tank dives, round-trip airfare from Belize City to San Pedro, \$683. **Resort affiliation** ► Sunbreeze Beach Hotel.

Blackbird Caye Resort

200 Pier Ave., Suite 39, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254, (888) 271-3483, (310) 937-6470, fax (310) 937-6473, e-mail: dive@blackbirdresort.com, internet: dive.blackbirdresort.com **Dives** ► Turneffe Reef Atoll, Lighthouse, Blue Hole. **What sets them apart** ► Individual, private cabanas. **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, 6 days diving, 3 meals daily, transfers, use of kayaks and sailboats, \$995 per person, dbl. occ. (from June 15-Nov. 15).

Blue Marlin Lodge

15 Mahogany St., P.O. Box 21, Dangriga, Belize, (800) 798-1558, (011) 501-522243, fax (011) 501-522296, e-mail: marlin@btl.net, internet: www.belize.net.com/marlin.html **Dives** ► The barrier reef. **What sets them apart** ► Centrally located with easy access to barrier reef and Glover's Atoll, off-the-beaten-path resort, personal service. **Booking offices** ► Magnum Belize, Ocean Connection, PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, diving, all-inclusive, \$1,112.88 per person (June-September). **Resort affiliation** ► South Water Caye.

Bottom Time Dive Shop

San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 382-7776, (713) 337-3758, fax (713) 337-1168 **Dives** ► Belize's barrier reef and atolls. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, 20 years experience diving Belize. **Booking office** ► BZ Travel Service, Dickinson Travel (800-777-5693). **Best buy** ► 7 nights at the San Pedro Holiday Hotel, 6 days diving, transfers, island flight, \$695.

Captain Morgan's

Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 447-2931, (218) 847-3012, fax (218) 847-0334, internet: www.captainmorgans.com. **Dives** ► Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Turneffe Islands Atoll, Lighthouse Reef and other reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Emphasis on customer service. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 10 dives, accommodations, breakfast and dinner, airfare from Miami, Houston or New Orleans, includes inter-island transfers, \$1,299 per person.

Coral Beach Hotel & Dive Club

P.O. Box 16, San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (011) 501-26-2013, fax (011) 501-26-2864, e-mail: forman@btl.net, internet: www.belize.com/coralbeach.html **Dives** ► Half Moon Caye, Blue Hole, Lighthouse Reef, Turneffe Island. **What sets them apart** ► "Off-Shore Express" overnight dive trips to Blue Hole. **Booking office** ► Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ► 6 nights, 7 days, 5 days diving, accommodations, 2 meals, \$650.

Frenchie's Diving Service

Caye Caulker, Belize, (011) 501-22-2234, fax (011) 501-22-2074 **Dives** ► Belize Barrier Reef, Turneffe Island, Lighthouse Reef, Blue Hole night dive. **What sets them apart** ► Experienced staff, wide variety of dive sites. **Best buy** ► 7 dives (includes Blue Hole and a night dive), accommodations, gear and meals not included, \$275.



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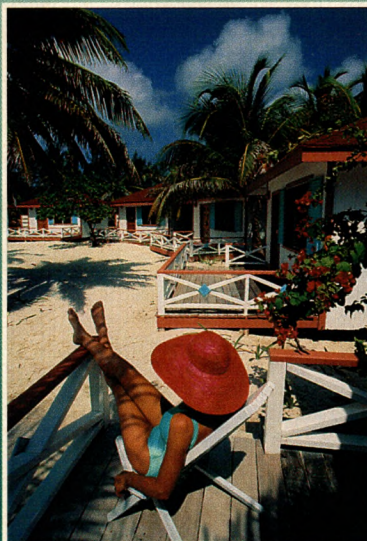
FAX: (212) 563-6033

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DIVE & TRAVEL EXPERTS

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1-800-777-5693

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- ▶ MAYAN RUINS
- ▶ JUNGLE TOURS, GUIDED TOURS
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- ▶ SCUBA DIVING
- ▶ PADI/NAUI SCUBA COURSES
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DIVE & TRAVEL EXPERTS

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CIRCLE NO. 118 ON READER SERVICE CARD

READER RATINGS/AMBERGRIS CAYE										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY										87.2
ADVANCED DIVING										86.4
HEALTH OF REEFS										85.2
VALUE										81.2
BEGINNER DIVING										78.4
FISH LIFE										76.2
QUALITY OF WALLS										76.0
SNORKELING										73.8
BIG ANIMALS										70.8

Gaz Cooper's Dive Belize

Journey's End Resort, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 460-5665, (011) 501-2-62964, fax (011) 501-2-62964 **Dives** ▶ North Ambergris Caye, Blue Hole, Turneffe Island, Lighthouse Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Camera rentals, photo instruction, PADI dive resort. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 5 days diving, 2 tanks daily, continental breakfast and dinner daily, water-sports, round-trip transfer from Belize City, \$995 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Journey's End Resort.

Hugh Parkey's Belize Dive Connection

PO Box 1818, Belize City, Belize, (888) 223-5403, (011) 501-2-34526, fax (011) 501-2-78808, e-mail: fortst@btl.net, internet: www.belizenet.com/fortst.html. **Dives** ▶ Belize barrier reef, Turneffe Atoll. **What sets them apart** ▶ Local knowledge, 70-plus dive sites, personal service, 6 divers max., 12 snorkelers min. **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 3 nights, all food, 2 days diving, transfers, \$375 per person, dbl. occ., 6 days, 5 nights, all food, 3 days diving, land excursion, \$675 per person, dbl. occ.

Lighthouse Reef Resort

Lighthouse Reef Atoll, Belize, (941) 687-4593, fax (941)

687-9428, e-mail: wwalt@gate.net, internet: scuba-light house.com **Dives** ▶ Great Blue Hole, Lighthouse Reef Atoll, Half Moon Wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ Beachfront villas, dedicated to serious divers, only hotel on Lighthouse Reef Atoll. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 20 meals, 17 boat dives, transfers, call for rates.

Manta Resort

3 Eyre St., Belize City, Belize, (800) 326-1724, (011) 501-232767, fax (011) 501-234449 **Dives** ▶ Glovers Reef Atoll. **What sets them apart** ▶ Private island, only dive operation in area. **Booking office** ▶ Experience the Adventure (ETA). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 8 days, 6 days diving, 3 meals daily, 2 night dives, transfers, \$1,295 per person, dbl. occ.

Nauti-One Dive Shop

Placencia Peninsula, Stann Creek, Belize, (800) 688-0377, (011) 501-6-23595, fax (011) 501-6-23594, internet: www.belizenet.com/nautical.html **Dives** ▶ Various reefs and southern cayes of Belize. **What sets them apart** ▶ Professional diving services and a Nauti-one dive boat. **Booking offices** ▶ Belize Dive Center (800-938-0860), Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, Travel Belize (303-494-7797). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days of 2-tank dives, room, meals, tax, \$969 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Nautical Inn Resort.

Placencia Dive Shop

Placencia Village, Belize, (011) 501-62-3313, fax (011) 501-62-3313 **Dives** ▶ Barrier reef, Laughing Bird Nat'l Park, numerous other cayes. **What sets them apart** ▶ First full-service dive operation in Placencia, caters to small groups, personal attention, emphasis on service. **Booking office** ▶ Discovery Expeditions Belize Ltd. (011-501-2-30748).

Ramon's Village Dive Shop

Coconut Dr., San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 624-4215, (011) 501-26-2071, fax (011) 501-26-2214 **Dives** ▶ Belize

Barrier Reef, outer atolls, Turneffe and Lighthouse. **What sets them apart** ▶ Boats equipped with all safety devices, including oxygen, NAUI Dream Resort and PADI International Resort. **Booking offices** ▶ Experience the Adventure (ETA), Landfall Productions, Ocean Connection, Tropical Travel (800-451-8017). **Best buy** ▶ 8-day, 7-night package including accommodations, tax, breakfast, 6 days of 2-tank dives, starting at \$713 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Ramon's Village.

Reef Divers, Ltd.

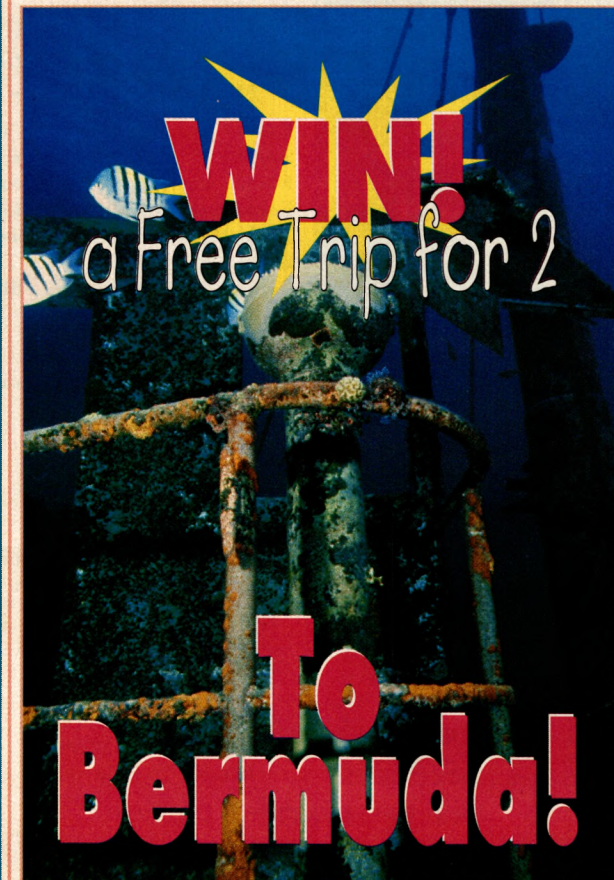
6-D Royal Palms Villa, San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (011) 501-26-3134, fax (011) 501-26-2943, e-mail: <reefdivers@btl.net **Dives** ▶ 26 miles of barrier reef off Ambergris Caye. **What sets them apart** ▶ All-inclusive, full-service diving on Ambergris Caye, instruction from basic to instructor, NAUI/PADI facilities. **Booking offices** ▶ Best of Belize & Beyond, Ocean Connection, Sea & Explore (504-393-8920). **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, \$45. **Resort affiliations** ▶ Royal Palm Villas, Mata Rocks Resort.

Rum Point Divers

Rum Point, Placencia, Belize, (800) 747-1381, (011) 501-6-23239, fax (011) 501-6-23240, e-mail: rupel@btl.net, internet: www.belizenet.com/rumpoint.html **Dives** ▶ Southern Belize. **What sets them apart** ▶ 42-foot fully equipped dive boat, insured divemasters and instructors, professional diving services, fully outfitted dive shop. **Booking office** ▶ Toucan-Tur, Ltd. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days diving, 1 night accommodation free and 1 day of diving free, private cabana, 3 meals daily, taxes and service charges, 2 dives daily, \$1,532 (sgl. occ.), \$1,083 (dbl. occ.), \$1,033 (triple occ.) per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Rum Point Inn.

Sea Sports Belize

Fiesta Inn Marina, Kings Park, Belize City, Belize, (011) 501-2-35505, fax (011) 501-2-75213, e-mail: bzadventur@btl.net, internet: www.belizenet.com/gat.html. **Dives** ▶ Historic



HERES HOW! ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVING IN BERMUDA AND YOU CAN BE REGISTERED TO WIN!

1. According to Rodale's *Scuba Diving's* 1996 Reader's Choice awards, Bermuda is the #__ Wreck Diving Destination in the Caribbean two years in a row!
2. Which wreck in Bermuda was Peter Benchley's inspiration for creating the movie "The Deep"?
3. What is the name of the wreck that still has a vintage fire truck on the forward deck?
4. How long will it take you to be in the water after leaving one of the major east coast air ports?
5. What event is being hosted by Bermuda in October?
6. What 4 dive operations in Bermuda can take you to some of the best wrecks in the Caribbean?

You will need to refer to the 4 page dive guide in this issue for your answers—or you can give your favorite Bermuda Dive operator a call!

Put your answers and your name and address on a 3x5 card and mail it to:

Bermuda Trivia Contest, 6600 Abercorn Street, Suite 208 • Savannah, GA 31405

(FREE TRIP INCLUDES 3 NIGHTS/4 DAYS ACCOMMODATIONS AND 2 DAYS OF DIVING. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. DRAWING HELD OCT. 1, 1997)

cayes barrier reef, Turneffe and Lighthouse atolls. **What sets them apart** ► PADI international resort, only full service dive shop in area. **Best buy** ► 5 days, 4 nights, 2 days diving, optional inland tour, \$465 per person. **Resort affiliation** ► Fiesta Inn Belize.

Soulshine Resort

Placencia, Belize, (800) 890-6082, fax (860) 767-7914, internet: www.soulshine.com **Dives** ► Laughing Bird, Ranguana, Little Caye. **What sets them apart** ► Small operation, special attention. **Best buy** ► Cabana, 5 2-tank dives, transfers, breakfast and dinner, \$1,060 per person, dbl. occ.

St. George's Lodge

St. George's Caye, Belize, (800) 678-6871, (011) 501-212121, fax (941) 488-3953, e-mail: aw2trav2bz@aol.com, internet: www.teleport.com/~belize **Dives** ► Barrier Reef at St. George's Caye, 9 to 12 miles of reef. **What sets them apart** ► Closest dive operation to mainland Belize, 18 years in business, nitrox, resort through instructor certifications, thatched cottages over water, 10-15 minutes to dive sites. **Booking office** ► Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ► \$1,349 per person, per week, includes transfers, meals, 3 dives daily, tips, taxes. **Resort affiliation** ► St. George's Lodge.

Turneffe Flats

Turneffe Atoll, Belize, (800) 815-1304, (605) 578-1304, fax (605) 578-7540, e-mail: flats@blackhills.com. **Dives** ► Entire Turneffe Atoll, Blue Hole, Half Moon Caye Wall. **What sets them apart** ► New guest accommodations, emphasis on service, caters to small groups. **Best buy** ► All-inclusive packages available, call for rates.

Turneffe Island Lodge

PO Box 2974, Gainesville, GA 30503, (800) 874-0118, (770) 534-3210, fax (770) 534-8290, e-mail: info@turneffelodge.com, internet: www.turneffelodge.com. **Dives** ► South end of Turneffe Atoll, The Elbow, Blue Hole, Half Moon Caye, Long Caye Wall. **What sets them apart** ► Full-service on-site dive operation, diving within 5 minutes of lodge. **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, 17 dives, 3 meals daily, roundtrip transfers, \$1,195-\$1,350. **Resort affiliation** ► Turneffe Island Lodge.

Turtle Inn

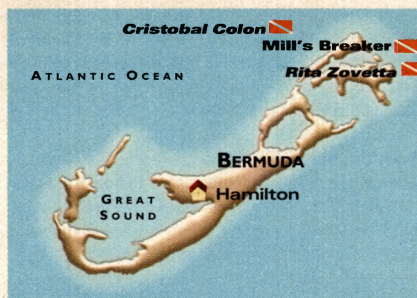
Placencia, Belize, (011) 501-62-3244, fax (011) 501-62-3245.

Victoria House/Fantasea

San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize, (800) 247-5159, (011) 501-26-2067, fax (011) 501-26-2429, e-mail: victoria@bze.com, internet: www.belizeit.com/victoriahouse.html **Dives** ► Ambergris Caye, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Shark Ray Alley. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, transfers, accommodations, most breakfasts, lunches and dinners, 7% gov't room tax, gratuities, 4 days diving, 2 dives/day, 1 night dive, \$2,055-\$3,635 per couple, depending on accommodations. **Resort affiliation** ► Victoria House.

Bermuda

For four centuries, Bermuda has been a magnet for ill-fated ships on the major trade route between the Old World and the New. Now this mid-Atlantic hook of islands draws divers looking for a quick dose of nitrogen and a short lesson in maritime history. The attraction is threefold: wrecks, wrecks, wrecks. The Gulf Stream blows a warm-water stream over Bermuda's underwater museum, nurturing the northernmost coral reefs in the Western Hemisphere and supporting an array of tropical fish hundreds of miles north of



their Caribbean habitat.

Weather

Bermuda has two seasons: a May-to-November summer (85F during the day; in the 70Fs at night) and a spring-like winter from December to April (60Fs to 70Fs during the day; 50Fs to 60Fs at night).

Average Water Temp

From 75F to 85F in the summer; dipping to the mid-60Fs in winter.

Visibility

The Gulf Stream guarantees clear water; 70 to 100 feet of vis is normal, with an occasional 150-foot day.

Getting There

Flight time to Bermuda's Kindley Airport is about two hours from East Coast cities. American Airlines flies to Bermuda from Boston and New York; Continental from Newark, N.J.; Delta from Boston and

Atlanta; US Airways from Baltimore, Charlotte, New York and Philadelphia; and Air Canada from Toronto.

Diving

The largest wreck in Bermuda, the 480-foot Spanish luxury liner *Cristobal Colon* was used as a bombing target in World War II, but her stern remains semi-intact and semi-penetrable. The 400-foot tramp steamer *Rita Zovetta* sank in 1924 and now lies in 65 feet of water. At Mill's Breaker you'll find the wrecks of three ships: the 200-foot iron-hulled sailing vessel *Beaumaris Castle*, the wooden brigantine *Avenger* and the luxury yacht *Colonel William Ball*.

DIVE OPERATORS

Blue Water Divers Co. Ltd.

Box SN 165, Southampton, Bermuda, (441) 234-1034, fax (441) 234-3561 **Dives** ► Bermuda's south, southwest, west, northwest and north sites. **What sets them apart** ► High guide-to-client ratio, wide variety of sites, dives the lee area; when the sea is rough, two boats, one high-speed. **Best buy** ► Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

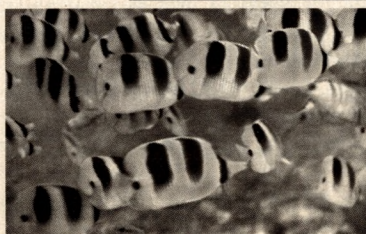
Fantasea Diving

Darrell's Wharf, Harbour Rd., Paget, Bermuda PG01, (888) DO-A-DIVE, (441) 236-6339, fax (441) 236-8926, e-mail: fantasea@ibl.bm, internet: www.bermuda-water.com/fantasea **Dives** ► Wrecks on the north, south and west sides of the island. **What sets them apart** ►

Explore the aquatic landscape of the Caribbean with a Bitter End Scuba Adventure

THE BITTER END | YACHT CLUB

North Sound, Virgin Gorda
British Virgin Islands



The Bitter End Yacht Club located on the North Sound of Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands is the perfect base to explore the undersea world of the Caribbean. For nearly thirty years, this family owned and operated resort has developed a world wide reputation and loyal guest base of families, friends, and couples who enjoy the water sports and relaxation that are a way of life at the Bitter End. It is a friendly, lively, casually elegant destination accessible only by water.

When you stay at the Bitter End on the Admiral's Package you will enjoy unlimited use of the resort's fleet of over 100 day sailers and outboard Boston Whalers, guided afternoon snorkeling trips, island excursions, all meals, round trip airport transfers and more. Complement your Bitter End vacation with the Scuba Adventure. Certified divers have the option of guided dive tours or exploring on their own. PADI resort course is available for non-certified divers. Other packages available.

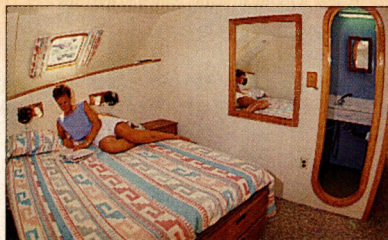
For more information call
1.800.872.2392 or your local travel agent.



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In the British Virgin Islands enjoy peaceful, silent sailing aboard the 105 ft. Cuan Law. Huge sails and powerful diesels speed you along in warm calm waters to some of the most varied diving in the Caribbean, with the stability of three hulls. Divers and non-divers can enjoy many other watersports and exciting shore trips. Relax after a day of diving in your 130 sq. ft. air-conditioned luxury stateroom. Like our Lammer Law in the Galapagos Islands, service is the key on-board the Cuan Law. Attentive and caring crew will make this a dive vacation you will always remember.



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St. Thomas, VI 00803
E-Mail: cuanlaw@caribsurf.com

CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD

BERMUDA

Offers variety of dive sites, PADI 5-Star Dive Center. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 4 dives, \$315/diver, \$195/nondiver; 6 nights, 8 dives, \$596/diver, \$371/nondiver; includes transfer, service charges, guide, gear locker.

South Side Scuba

Sonesta Beach Hotel, Southampton Beach, Bermuda, (441) 238-1833, fax (441) 236-0394 **Dives** ▶ South shore, west end. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, Bermuda wreck, reef and night dives. **Best buy** ▶ 3 2-tank dives, tanks and weights, \$175.

READER RATINGS/BERMUDA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
SNORKELING											88.0
QUALITY OF WRECKS											87.4
BEGINNER DIVING											83.8
ADVANCED DIVING											76.2
VALUE											73.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											71.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											71.2
FISH LIFE											56.2
SHORE DIVING											55.8

British Virgin Islands

Sixty miles east of Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands are a string of 50 islands and cays perched atop a shallow, subsea shelf. Awash in calm blue waters, the submerged bases of these volcanic islands offer a diverse—but understated—diving playground of pinnacles, tunnels, boulder mazes and overhangs. Encrusted with the full colorful array of Caribbean corals and sponges, most dive sites are in 70 feet of water or less. A refuge for sailors and pirates from the earliest days of settlement, the BVIs also share a wealth of shipwrecks.

Land-based diving is concentrated on the two largest islands, Virgin Gorda and Tortola, but the whole span of islands covers only 35 miles, and you're never more than a 30-minute boat ride from any BVI dive site.

Weather

Summer temperatures range from 80F to 90F, with winter temperatures ranging from 75F to 85F. Constant trade winds cool warm days and can cause a 10F to 15F temperature drop at night.

Average Water Temp

Surface temperatures range in the mid-70Fs in winter, and mid-80Fs in summer.

Visibility

Averages 60 to 100 feet.

Getting There

There are no direct flights to the BVIs from U.S. gateways, but there are a number of connecting flights to Tortola and Virgin Gorda from San Juan, Puerto Rico, and St.

Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands on American, United, Liat and Sunair Express.

Diving

Don't leave the BVIs without sampling the wreck diving, in particular the *RMS Rhone*. The British mail steamer sank in 1867 and has been sprouting colorful coral and sponge growth ever since. Volcanic pinnacles like *Blonde Rock* that rise up from the floor of the sandy shelf are natural condos of marine life, crowded with spotted morays, crab and lobster, as well as great schools of fish from silversides to barracuda. Lava tubes, tunnels and boulder mazes at sites like *The Cave* and *The Baths* are shallow dive and snorkel spots where you can enjoy artistic expressions carved in water, light and rock.



DIVE OPERATORS

Baskin In The Sun

Road Town, Tortola, BVI, (800) 650-2084, (305) 451-4759, fax (305) 451-4790, e-mail: baskindive@aol.com, internet: www.dive-baskin.com. **Dives** ▶ British Virgin Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on customer service. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days/8 nights, 10 boat dives, transfers, tax and service charge, \$657.

Blue Water Divers

Box 846, Road Town, Tortola, BVI, (809) 494-2847, fax (809) 494-0198, e-mail: bwdbvi@caribsurf.com **Dives** ▶ *RMS Rhone*, Indians, Blonde Rock, Santa Monica Rock, Painted Walls, Angel Fish Reef, The Dogs, The Chimney, Jost Van Dyke, Alice in Wonderland, Alice's Back Door and others. **What sets them apart** ▶ 40 years experience in the BVIs, professional instructors, friendly and relaxed atmosphere. **Best buy** ▶ 2 nights, one 2-tank dive, \$188 (dbl. occ.); 4 nights, three 2-tank dives, \$406 (dbl. occ.); 7 nights, six 2-tank dives, \$733 (dbl. occ.). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Nanny Cay Hotel.

Dive BVI

Virgin Gorda, BVI, (800) 848-7078, (809) 495-5513, fax (809) 495-5347, e-mail: dbvi@caribsurf.com, internet: www.britishvirginislands.com/divebvi **Dives** ▶ British Virgin Islands, *RMS Rhone* and *Chikuzen*, Norman Island to Virgin Gorda. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dives from 4 locations throughout BVIs, packages can be split among locations, 45-foot Wave Piercer. **Best buy** ▶ Accommodations at Leverick Bay Hotel, 10 dives, hotel tax and service charge, 1-10 people, \$665 per person; 11-20 people, \$620 per person. **Resort affiliations** ▶ Peter Island, Little Dix Bay, Leverick Bay, Marina Cay.

READER RATINGS/TORTOLA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											89.8
BEGINNER DIVING											88.0
ADVANCED DIVING											83.2
VALUE											82.8
SNORKELING											82.2
FISH LIFE											79.6
QUALITY OF WRECKS											78.8
HEALTH OF REEFS											78.0
QUALITY OF WALLS											55.6
BIG ANIMALS											52.6

Kilbride's Sunchaser Scuba Ltd.
Virgin Gorda, BVI, (800) 932-4286, (809) 495-9638, fax (809) 495-7549 Dives ▶ RMS Rhone, Ginger Island, Dog Islands, Chikuzen, Cooper Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom-built dive boat, friendly staff, custom video of your dive. **Booking office** ▶ Bitter End Yacht Club, (800) 872-2392. **Best buy** ▶ Package at Bitter End Yacht Club, \$160 for 3 days; elsewhere, \$225 for 3 days, \$360 for 5 days. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bitter End Yacht Club.

Underwater Safaris

PO Box 139, Road Town, Tortola, BVI, (800) 537-7032, (809) 494-3235, fax (809) 494-5322, e-mail: undsaf@carib-surf.com Dives ▶ British Virgin Islands, except Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke. **What sets them apart** ▶ Rendezvous diving, caters to small groups, guided tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights at Maria's by the Sea, 5 days of diving, 1-day car rental, \$849 per person (Dec.-April); \$776 per person (April-Dec.). **Resort affiliation** ▶ The Moorings Marina Inn.

California



If California dreaming conjures up only images of surfer dudes and *Baywatch* betties, you're missing out on the best temperate diving in the USA.

Running from Oregon to Tijuana, the 800 miles of California coastline offers the most diverse and richest marine ecosystem in North America. From the craggy cliffs and kelp beds of San Francisco's Monterey Bay to the offshore archipelago of L.A.'s Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, to the deep water shark cage expedi-

tions off San Diego, California diving has one constant—chilly water—but an infinite variety of marine life. Grab a quarter-inch wetsuit and see what we mean.

Weather

Check the Weather Channel. The long coast offers widely varying and sometimes unpredictable conditions.

Average Water Temp

Low to mid-50Fs in northern and central regions; high 60Fs in the south.

Visibility

Varies according to season and location. Expect an average of 50 feet offshore and 20 feet nearshore.

Diving

Grab your camera and go on a photo safari for the brilliant orange garibaldi in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Don a snorkel and go in search of tasty abalone, or try your hand at spearing lingcod, sheephead or cabezon at nearshore sites in Mendocino County. Glimpse California sea life at its most pristine in the marine reserve of Anacapa Island, one of the five Channel Islands.

DIVE OPERATORS

Anacapa Dive Center

22 Anacapa St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101, (805) 963-8917, fax (805) 963-8919 What sets them apart ▶ Boat charters to the Channel Islands and shore diving available, PADI 5-star facility, offers on-site pool, repair facility. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ Custom-tailored dive packages.

Argo Diving Service

314 Metropole Ave., Box 2289, Avalon, CA 90704, (888) 592-5644 Dives ▶ Catalina, San Clemente, Santa Barbara. **What sets them apart** ▶ Home of Rodale's ScubaLab™, marine life encounters with sharks, rays and mammals, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ Full-day charter for up to 6 divers, \$500, includes tanks, weights, refills, food and drinks.

Atlantis Charters

Box 688, Sunset Beach, CA 90742, (562) 592-1154, fax (562) 592-5644 Dives ▶ Catalina, San Clemente, Santa Barbara. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only dive boat located in Orange County. 65-foot boat, 132-square-foot dive ramp, free use of dive kayaks. **Booking office** ▶ Wind and Sea Cruises, (800) 588-1065. **Best buy** ▶ Catalina trip, 3 dives, open boat, breakfast, lunch, snacks, drinks and air fills, \$54.95. Non-divers can accompany divers for \$24.95.

Beach Hopper II

3765 Redwood Hwy., San Rafael, CA 94903, (800) 806-2345, (415) 479-4332, fax (415) 479-3130 Dives ▶ Monterey Bay, Carmel Bay to Point Sur. **What sets them apart** ▶ Limits groups to 10 divers max., personal service. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, \$65.

Catalina West End Dive Center

#1 Banning House Rd., Two Harbors, CA 90704, (310) 510-0303, fax (310) 510-0244, e-mail: 2harbors@catalinas.net, internet: www.catalina.com/twoharbors. Dives ▶ Various Catalina Island sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ 3- to 15-minute travel time to sites, fast and spacious dive boats. **Best buy** ▶ 2 days at Banning House B&B, 2 days of a.m. boat dives, roundtrip cross-

Channel transfers, \$199 to \$275.

Just Add Water Sports

180 Lincoln Blvd., #A, Santa Monica, CA 90404, (310) 581-2711, fax (310) 581-2719, e-mail: 102023.2362@compuserve.com. Dives ▶ Southern California, Catalina, Anacapa, Santa Cruz. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full PADI, IAN D store, sales, repairs, rental, boat trips, rebreathers, nitrox, deep air, rebreather classes, referrals, offers travel packages. **Best buy** ▶ Call for rates.

Liberty

156 Spinnaker Dr., Suite 203-59, Ventura Harbor, CA 93001, (818) 352-8855, fax (818) 352-8855 Dives ▶ Channel Islands, including Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, Santa Barbara, San Nicolas. **What sets them apart** ▶ Large sun deck, roomy back deck, freshwater camera rinse, 40 single and 6 double bunks, freshwater hot tub, game tank, TV, VCR, airfills, 2 heads, 2 indoor showers. **Booking office** ▶ Take Me, Too! (800-494-2836). **Best buy** ▶ Monday trip, \$60, includes lunch, 2 air fills, 3 dives on Anacapa Island, departs 8 a.m., returns 4:30 p.m.

Lois Ann Dive Charters

586 Lord Cecil St., San Diego, CA 92122, (800) 201-4381, (619) 450-4478, fax (619) 453-6306, e-mail: loisann@aol.com, internet: www.thenerve2.com/san-diego/loisann Dives ▶ La Jolla, Point Loma kelp forests, Wreck Alley and Los Coronados Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Was rated #2 best boat dive in RSD's Reader Ratings 2 years in a row. **Best buy** ▶ 3 dives, tanks and weights, food and soft drinks, \$65; 4 dives, tanks and weights, food and soft drinks, \$85.

Rock Divers/America II Charters

349 Mountain View Dr., San Diego, CA 92116-1951, (800) 966-1433, (619) 584-0742, fax (619) 584-4198 Dives ▶ San Diego's Wreck Alley and the kelp forests of Point Loma and La Jolla. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, personal service, 16 years experience in San Diego, 13 years as NAUI dive instructor. **Booking offices** ▶ Diving Locker (619-272-1120), Islandia Sportfishing Landing (619-222-1164). **Best buy** ▶ 1/2-day, 2-tank dives to Wreck Alley and kelp forest, tanks and weights, snacks and soft drinks, \$47.50 per person, group rates available.

READER RATINGS/CATALINA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING											88.0
VALUE											82.8
BEGINNER DIVING											81.6
PHOTOGRAPHY											78.0
FISH LIFE											75.4
HEALTH OF REEFS											75.4
SNORKELING											74.8
SHORE DIVING											72.0
QUALITY OF WALLS											55.6
BIG ANIMALS											52.6

READER RATINGS/CHANNEL ISLANDS

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
VALUE											88.4
ADVANCED DIVING											86.0
PHOTOGRAPHY											82.0
BEGINNER DIVING											76.8
HEALTH OF REEFS											76.4
FISH LIFE											74.2
SNORKELING											67.6
SHORE DIVING											63.0
BIG ANIMALS											57.6
QUALITY OF WALLS											56.2

Spectre

1567 Spinnaker Dr., Suite 203-59, Ventura, CA 93001, (805) 483-6612, fax (805) 486-5508, e-mail: tkmetoo@aol.com, internet: superpages.gte.net **Dives** ▶ Northern Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Specializes in local 3- and 4-tank 1-day trips, close proximity to dive sites and islands, hotel/dive packages available. **Booking office** ▶ Take Me, Too! (800-494-2836, 805-486-4486). **Best buy** ▶ 1-day, 3-dive trip to Anacapa Island, lunch and air included, \$60 (weekdays), \$68 (weekends).

SunDiver

160 Marina Dr., Long Beach, CA 90803, (562) 493-0951, fax (562) 493-1013 **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ New customized boat, scuba tanks provided, boat located in exclusive area. **Best buy** ▶ 1-day midweek Catalina trip, diving, food, air, tanks and weights, \$55; 2-day outer island trip, 8-10 dives, night dives, food, air, tanks and weights, \$199.

Truth Aquatics Inc.

301 W. Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara, CA 93101-3886, (805) 962-1127, fax (805) 564-6754, e-mail: taqua@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.imal.com/stores/taqua **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom-built dive boats. **Best buy** ▶ 1-day to 5-day trips, including nonalcoholic drinks, snacks, meals, air fills and bunks, from \$125 per day.

Ventura Dive & Sport

1559 Spinnaker Dr. #108, Ventura Harbor Village, Ventura, CA 93001, (805) 650-6500, fax (805) 656-3477 **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star center, on-site heated pool, single and multiday dive trips, all levels of training, rentals. **Best buy** ▶ 1-day, 4-dive charter boat trip, includes delivery of rental gear to local dive boats, \$68 (weekends).

Cayman Islands

If Caribbean diving has a mantra that all divers know, it's a two-syllable chant: Cay-man.

Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac—the three islands that make up the British Crown Colony of the Cayman Islands—have been wowing divers with the Caribbean's most consistent vis and abundant wall diving since 1957. Judging from the 1997 Readers' Choice Top 100 survey, where the islands earned three of the top 10 spots in the list of favorite Atlantic/Caribbean destinations, they haven't slowed down a bit.

Grand Cayman, the cosmopolitan resort island, handles the bulk of diving tourists, making the dive sites of the accessible West and North walls among the most visited in the Caribbean. You'll also find good diving on the remote East End and rarely visited South Wall. Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, known as the Sister Islands, are favorites among Cayman vets who enjoy their laid-back, rustic charms.

Weather

Mild year-round with temperatures in the 70Fs in winter and mid- to high

80Fs in summer.

Average Water Temp

77F in winter; 82F in summer.

Visibility

Averages 100 feet year-round, with summer peaks of 200 and occasional drops to 80 feet in winter.

Getting There

Cayman Airways offers direct flights to Grand Cayman from Miami, Atlanta, Houston, Tampa and Orlando, as well as flights to Cayman Brac. Direct flights to Grand Cayman are also available from US Airways, American Airlines and Northwest Airlines from Miami, Charlotte, Tampa, Atlanta, Houston, New York and Baltimore. The only regularly scheduled service linking all three islands are the twice-daily flights of Island Air.

Diving

Convenient to the resorts, condos and dive shops of Seven Mile Beach, the dive sites along Grand Cayman's West and North Walls are among the most heavily dived in the Caribbean. Stingray City is now a 10-year-old institution, and as popular as ever. The remote East End and the rarely dived South Wall also thrill savvy divers on Grand Cayman. Cayman Brac's own exciting wall dives are getting a boost from the wreck of the



Divi knows that divers who come to the Cayman Islands seek extraordinary scuba experiences. That's why Divi and Peter Hughes Dive Tiara have combined to offer service, reliability and the best diving possible.



Dive Cayman Brac's newest dive site... A RUSSIAN DESTROYER

3 Night Packages
from \$427**

*Packages include one trip per stay. Additional trips are available at discounted rates. All trips are weather permitting.

**Package price quoted is per person, based on double occupancy and includes daily breakfast, dinner, and all taxes and service charges on package features. Package is valid until 12/19/97 and includes three daytime boat dives as scheduled.

(800) 367-3484

Local Phone (919) 419-3484

FEATURING:

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- 5 custom designed Dive Boats
- 2 Islands with daily trips to Little Cayman*
- 3, 2, 1 daytime boat dives per day
- Night dives
- PADI 5 STAR dive and photo center

*All-inclusive packages available
70 comfortable air-conditioned guestrooms
Palm lined beach with freshwater pool,
tennis, volleyball, snorkeling, paddleboats
or gamefishing*

Special discount packages for single travelers

Peter Hughes Diving

CIRCLE NO. 43 ON READER SERVICE CARD

MV Capt. Keith Tibbetts, the only dive-able Russian warship in the Western Hemisphere. Little Cayman's Bloody Bay Wall is perhaps the Caribbean's finest vertical real estate. It starts in just 20 feet of water, offering divers the thrills of a deep wall plunge with the nitrogen load of a shallow dive.

DIVE OPERATORS

CAYMAN BRAC

Brac Aquatics Ltd.

West End, Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands, (800) 544-2722, (345) 948-1429, fax (345) 948-1527 **Dives** ▶ Cayman Brac, Little Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ 20 years of locally owned and operated service, variety of hotel packages available. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, Inter-Ocean Tours, Island Dreams, Island Holidays, Poseidon Venture Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days diving, \$695. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Brac Caribbean Beach Resort.

Dive Tiara/Peter Hughes

Stake Bay, Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands, (800) 367-3484, (345) 948-1553, fax (345) 948-1316, e-mail: stevo@candw.ky **Dives** ▶ More than 50 sites off Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ Crew handles gear, packages include 3 boat dives daily, 5 dive boats, caters to small groups. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Divi Holidays (800-948-1553), PADI Travel Network, Poseidon Venture Tours, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days of 3-tank boat dives, breakfast and dinner, transfers, taxes and service charges, \$1,100 per person, dbl. occ.

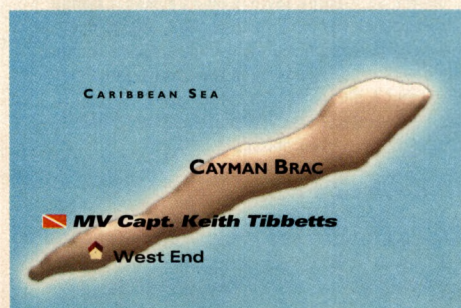
Reef Divers/

Brac Reef Beach Resort

PO Box 56, West End, Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands, (800) 327-3835, (345) 948-1323, fax (345) 948-1207, e-mail: refz79a@prodigy.com, internet: www.braclittle.com **Dives** ▶ More than 30 sites, including Bloody Bay Wall, Tarpon Reef, Wilderness Wall, Green House, East Chute, *MV Capt. Keith Tibbetts*. **What sets them apart** ▶ 3-tank dives each day, 2 new Newton boats. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Tours, Reef Fanta-seas, Tropical Adventures Travel.

READER RATINGS/CAYMAN BRAC

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING											90.4
QUALITY OF WALLS											90.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											89.6
PHOTOGRAPHY											89.0
VALUE											84.2
FISH LIFE											82.6
BEGINNER DIVING											78.8
SNORKELING											63.0
BIG ANIMALS											56.6
SHORE DIVING											52.6



Best buy ▶ 7 nights all-inclusive, includes transfers, local taxes, meals, unlimited beverages, 3-tank dives daily, \$1,465. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Brac Reef Beach Resort.

GRAND CAYMAN

Ambassador Divers

S. Church St., Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 648-7748, (345) 949-8839, fax (345) 949-8839 **Dives** ▶ Grand Cayman's north, south and west sides. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Ambassador Inn.

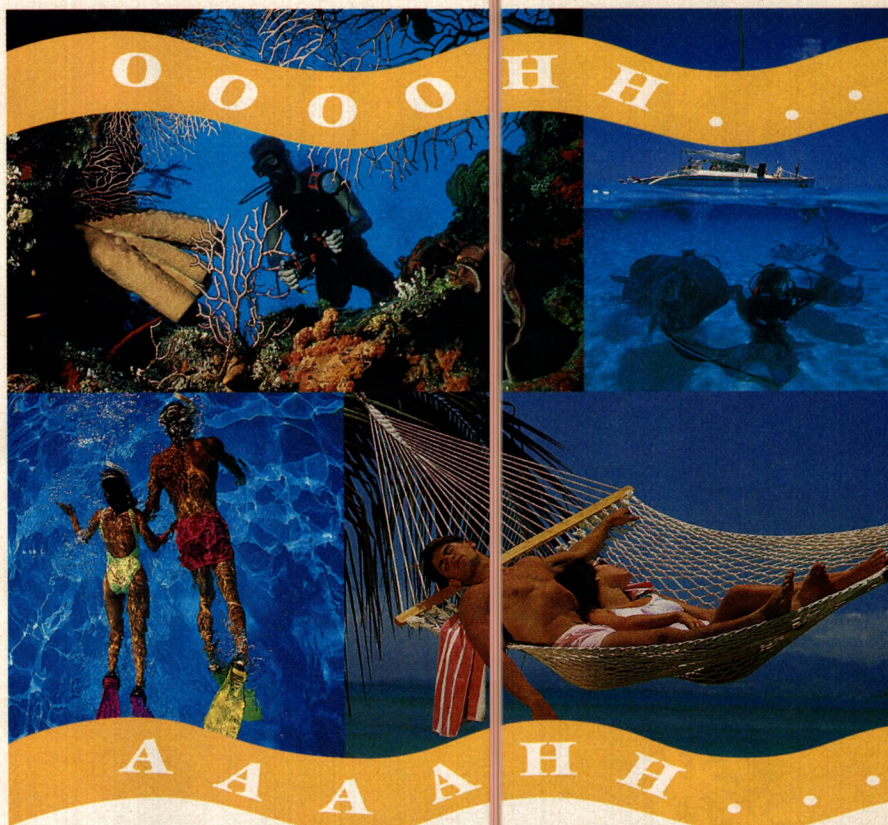
Aquanauts Diving

Box 30147, Seven Mile Beach, George Town, Grand

Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 357-2212, (345) 945-1990, fax (345) 945-1991, e-mail: aquanaut@candw.ky, internet: www.aquanauts.com **Dives** ▶ Grand Cayman's north, west and south sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, caters to small groups. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventures Below (216-255-8153), The Scuba Store (908-806-3999). **Best buy** ▶ 6 days, 6 2-tank dives, 2 1-tank dives, \$369 when pre-booked.

Bobsoto's Diving, Ltd.

PO Box 1801, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) BOB-OTO, (345) 949-2022, fax (345) 949-8731, e-mail: bobsotos@candw.ky, bobsotos@cayman.org. **Dives** ▶ West Wall wrecks and reefs, North Wall reefs and Stingray City, South Wall reefs, East End and far North-



RED SAIL SPORTS

has locations in the world's best dive waters — Grand Cayman and Aruba. If you want unforgettable diving, friendly service and custom built dive boats, dive with Red Sail Sports. A variety of hotel and diving packages are available from budget to first-class accommodations including the Hyatt Regency and Westin Caparrina Resorts. Dive packages available starting at \$214 for a 4 day/3 night stay. Call today!

World-wide reservations:

800-255-6425

<http://www.redsailsports.com>

Advertised rate is based on double occupancy, valid 4/21-12/15/97. Package rates vary at each location. Call for pricing details.

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ARUBA THE BAHAMAS CURAÇAO GRAND CAYMAN HAWAII

CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD

east Walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Oldest dive operation in the world, emphasis on customer service and safety. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Dive Tours, Star Dive Travel (800-767-3023). **Best buy** ▶ Accommodations at Treasure Island Resort, 2-tank dives daily, unlimited shore diving, round-trip airfare from Miami, 1 afternoon or night dive, through Dec. 15, optional meal plan, transfers, \$899 (8 days, 7 nights, 6 days diving), \$699 (6 days, 5 nights, 4 days diving), \$499 (4 days, 3 nights, 2 days diving). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Treasure Island Resort.

Capitol's Surfside Watersports
Box 30-370, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 543-6828, (345) 949-7330, fax (345) 949-8639, e-mail: surfside@cayman.org, internet: www.cayman.

org/surfside Dives ▶ Grand Cayman's south, north and west walls and Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ 25 years of experience, uncrowded boats, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ Summer special 1997, 7 nights beachfront accommodations, 5 days diving, \$599 per person, dbl. occ.

Cayman Dive College

George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 949-4125, fax (345) 949-4125, e-mail: divecoll@candw.ky, internet: cayman.com.ky/com/divecoll Dives ▶ Shore diving only on Tarpon Reef and shore diving expeditions island-wide. **What sets them apart** ▶ Teaching facility, multilingual instructors teach open-water through dive-master courses, on-site training, money-back guaran-

tee. **Best buy** ▶ Half-day shore diving expeditions, \$60 per person, all gear included.

Cayman Diving Lodge

PO Box 11, East End, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) TLC-DIVE, (345) 947-7555, fax (806) 798-7568, e-mail: divelodge@aol.com, internet: www.caymandivelodge.com Dives ▶ East end of Grand Cayman, Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ Beachfront dedicated dive lodge, all services on-site, all-inclusive packages, only dive lodge on east end, uncrowded boats. **Booking office** ▶ Ultimate Dive Travel (800-737-3483). **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, \$368 per person, dbl. occ.; 5 nights, \$626; 7 nights, \$884. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Cayman Diving Lodge.

Cayman Marine Lab

Box 31486, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 916-0849, fax (345) 945-5586 Dives ▶ Grand Cayman's northern, western and southern dive sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Free marine biology lessons during surface intervals.

Dive 'N Stuff

P.O. Box 30609, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 949-6033, fax (345) 945-9207, e-mail: divenstuff@cayman.org, internet: www.divenstuff.com Dives ▶ North, south and west coasts, Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ More than 25 years experience, personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Aqua Hut (419-476-3100). **Best buy** ▶ Book four 2-tank dives, get the first one free.

Don Foster's Dive Cayman

P.O. Box 31486, Seven Mile Beach, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 83-DIVER, (345) 949-7181, fax (345) 945-5133, e-mail: dffus@airmail.net Dives ▶ Grand Cayman's north, west and south walls, Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom-built dive boats, emphasis on safety and fun. **Booking office** ▶ Don Foster's Reservations (800-83-DIVER or 972-722-2535). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights at the Holiday Inn, 6 days diving, six 2-tank boat dives, free air fills for shore diving, tanks and weights, \$964.50 per person, dbl. occ. (summer package). **Resort affiliations** ▶ Holiday Inn, Radisson Resort.

READER RATINGS/GRAND CAYMAN

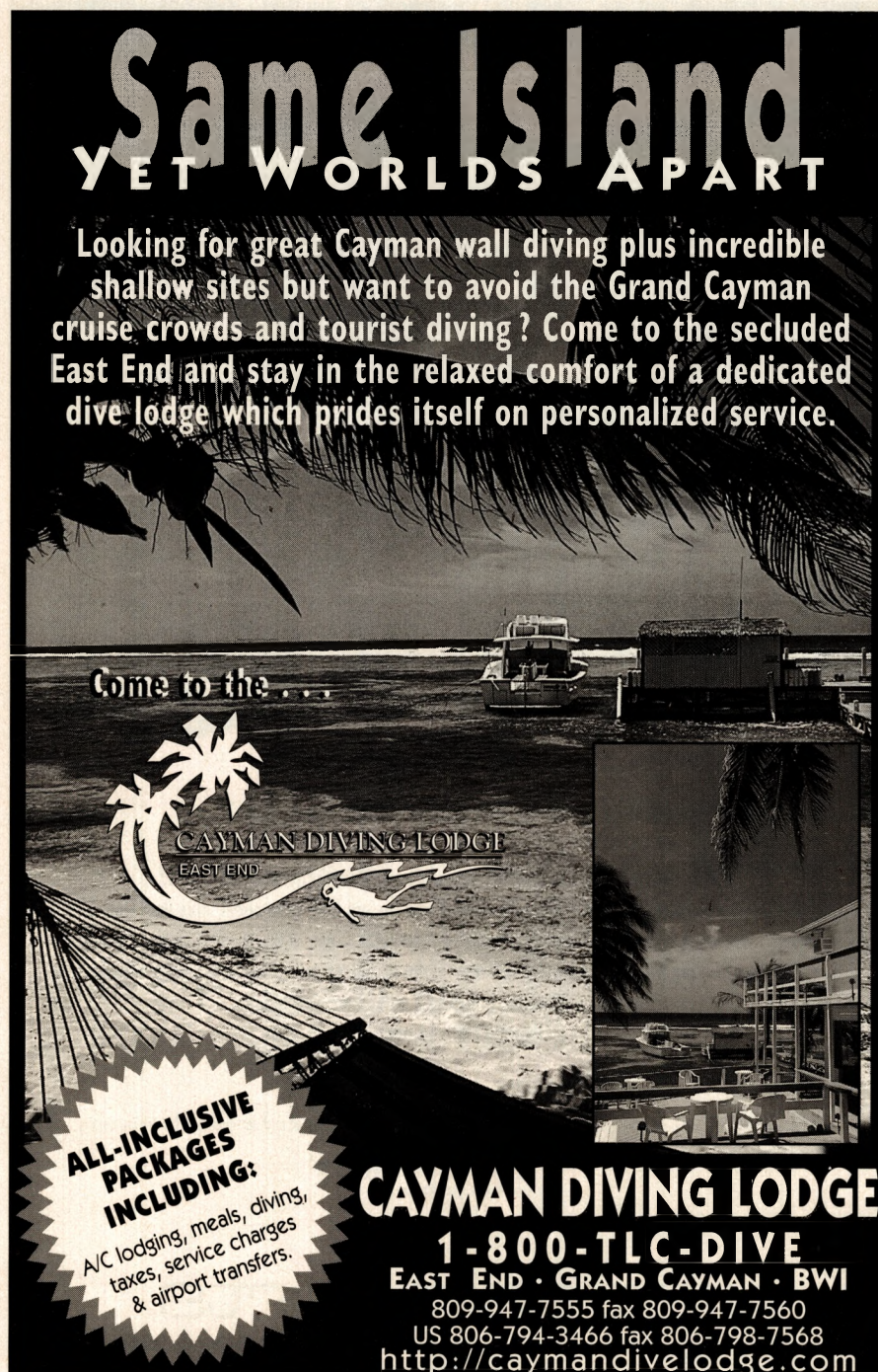
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
QUALITY OF WALLS											90.8
PHOTOGRAPHY											89.8
ADVANCED DIVING											89.6
BEGINNER DIVING											86.6
HEALTH OF REEFS											82.6
FISH LIFE											82.2
SNORKELING											81.2
VALUE											80.0
SHORE DIVING											75.0
BIG ANIMALS											64.0
QUALITY OF WRECKS											59.6

Eden Rock Diving Center

S. Church St., George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 949-7243, fax (345) 949-0842, e-mail: edenrock@candw.ky, Dives ▶ Eden Rocks, Devils Grotto, Stingray City, north, south and west walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shore diving, staff of 9 instructors, PADI, NAUI, SSI and BSAC affiliation. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 6 nights, \$500 per person, dbl. occ.

Fisheye of Cayman

P.O. Box 30076, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 887-8569, (345) 945-4209, fax (345) 945-4208, e-mail: fisheye@candw.ky, internet: www.fisheye.com Dives ▶ All around Grand Cayman. **What sets them**



**Same Island
YET WORLDS APART**

Looking for great Cayman wall diving plus incredible shallow sites but want to avoid the Grand Cayman cruise crowds and tourist diving? Come to the secluded East End and stay in the relaxed comfort of a dedicated dive lodge which prides itself on personalized service.

Come to the ...

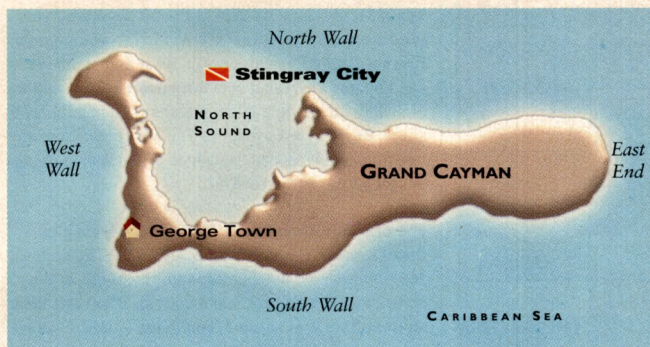
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<http://caymandivelodge.com>

CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CAYMANS



apart ▶ Caters to small groups, personal attention, Nikon-sanctioned photo center. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights at Sleep Inn, 6 days of diving, 1 night dive, use of underwater camera, gear locker, \$599 per person, includes all tax.

Indies Divers

PO Box 2070, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 654-3130, (345) 945-5025, fax (345) 945-5024 **Dives** ▶ North and west walls, Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ Spacious boats, 12 divers max., personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Moore Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights accommodations in 1-bedroom suite, continental breakfast, 5 2-tank dives, hotel tax, \$886.50 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Indies Suites.

Ocean Frontiers

P.O. Box 30433, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 544-6576, (345) 947-7500, fax (345) 947-7500, e-mail: oceanf@candw.ky, internet: www.oceanfrontiers.com **Dives** ▶ East end of Grand Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, emphasis on ecology, only independent East End dive shop, pickups from Seven-Mile Beach, unguided computer dives allowed. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights accommodations, 6 2-tank dives, 1 night dive, \$745.

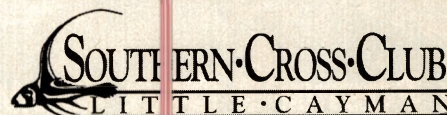
Parrots Landing Watersports Park

P.O. Box 1995, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 448-0428, (345)

The Southern Cross Club is a natural seaside preserve and secluded island hideaway located on the finest beach in Little Cayman. You will step from your newly renovated private beach cottage, one of only ten that dapple the white sand at water's edge, onto our comfortable dive boats, *Coral Star* and *Coral Sun*. Experience the famous Bloody and Jackson Bay walls with a maximum of ten divers. Our primitive luxury is unique in the Caribbean providing an unforgettable experience. Enjoyment comes naturally at the Southern Cross Club.

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CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Treasure Island
DIVERS

10 YEARS IN GRAND CAYMAN, BWI

Dive
Grand Cayman
for less than

\$17 PER
DIVE

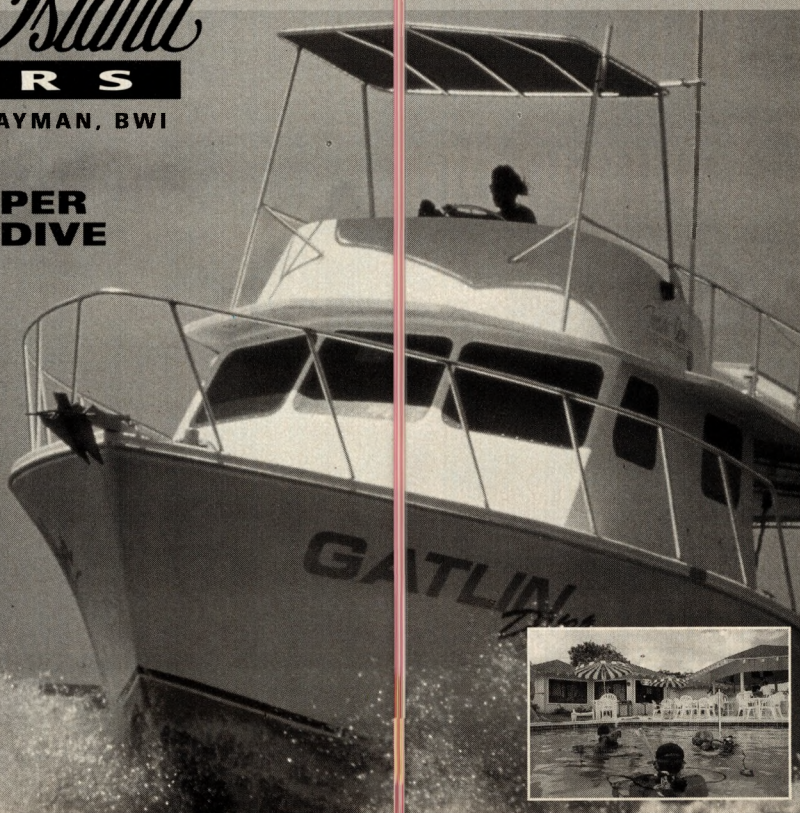
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E-mail: tidivers@netrunner.net
<http://deepedge.com/TIDivers>



CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GRAND CAYMAN

DON FOSTER'S DIVE CAYMAN combines safety **AND** fun to give you a great dive experience! We are Grand Cayman's premier dive & watersports operator. Call today and ask about our special Holiday Inn Package.

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NOW AT THREE LOCATIONS:

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MORE BOATS



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- Caribbean's Newest Sensation! A 300 ft. Russian Destroyer!
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Beach Resort
CAYMAN ISLANDS

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e-mail refz79a@prodigy.com or for online brochure www.braclittle.com

CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CAYMANS

949-7884, fax (345) 949-0294, e-mail: splash@parrots-landing.com, internet: www.parrotslanding.com.
Dives ▶ Grand Cayman's north, west and south walls and Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wide variety of diving, including guided, advanced, computer and shore. **Best buy** ▶ Cayman To The Max promotion: airfare from Miami, accommodations and unlimited diving, 5-night packages start at \$702.

Peter Milburn's Dive Cayman

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 945-5770, fax (345) 945-5786, e-mail: pmilburn@candw.ky, **Dives** ▶ West, north and south sides of Grand Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, small operation, 29 years experience on Grand Cayman.

Red Sail Sports Grand Cayman

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 255-6425, (345) 947-5965, fax (345) 945-5808, e-mail: redsail@candw.ky, **Dives** ▶ Grand Cayman's north and west walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Spacious, custom-designed dive boats, freshwater showers, rinse tanks, camera tables, drinks, fresh fruit. **Best buy** ▶ Various packages at the Hyatt Regency, Westin Casuarina, Christopher Columbus Condominiums, Grand Pavilion Hotel, The Retreat Condos, Cayman Kai. Call for details and rates.

Sunset Divers

PO Box 479, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 854-4767, (305) 451-0083, fax (305) 451-5147, e-mail: sunsets@candw.ky, internet: www.cayman.org/sunset/ **Dives** ▶ North, south, east and west coasts, Stingray City. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced staff, seven custom dive boats, computer diving on all boats, shore diving, instructional facility for PADI, NAUI, SSI and NASDS. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Tours, Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Certified Vacations (800-233-7260), Funway Holidays (800-558-3050), Liberty GoGo (800-899-2558), PADI Travel Network, Scuba Network (800-688-3483), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 4 days of boat diving, free shore diving, full breakfast daily, airport transfers, tax, \$660 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sunset House.

Sunset Underwater Photo Center and Gallery

c/o Sunset House Hotel, PO Box 479, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 949-7415, fax (345) 949-9770, e-mail: cathy@cathychurch.com, internet: www.cathychurch.com **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service photo center, camera and video rentals, Nikonos repairs, world's largest underwater photo gallery. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sunset House.

Treasure Island Divers

Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 872-7552, (345) 949-4456, fax (345) 949-7125, e-mail: tidivers@netrunner.net, internet: deepedge.com/tidivers. **Dives** ▶ All sides of Grand Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on customer service. **Best buy** ▶ Custom-tailored packages; dive Grand Cayman for less than \$17 per dive with unlimited diving package. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Treasure Island Resort.

LITTLE CAYMAN

Paradise Divers

PO Box 30, Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, (345) 948-0001, fax (345) 948-0002, e-mail: iggy@candw.ky, internet: www.scubatimes.com **Dives** ▶ Bloody Bay, Jackson Bay, Preston Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, small customized dive operation. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days diving, includes taxes, gratuities and transfers, \$899 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Paradise Villas Resort.

Pirates Point Resort



PO Box 43, Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 327-8777, (345) 948-1010, fax (345) 948-1011 **Dives** ▶ Bloody Bay Wall, south and east walls, Jackson Wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to both beginning and advanced divers, new 42-foot Newton dive boat, 20 divers max., camera tables and freshwater shower, emphasis on marine biology. **Best buy** ▶ Weekly all-inclusive packages: \$1,350 per person (Dec. 15-April 15), \$1,195 per person (April 15-Dec. 15). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Pirates Point Resort.

Reef Divers/Little Cayman Beach Resort

Blossom Village, Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 327-3835, (345) 948-1033, fax (345) 948-1040, e-mail: refz79a@prodigy.com, **Dives** ▶ Bloody Bay Wall, Nancy's Cup of Tea, Marilyn's Cut, Mixing Bowl, Randy's Gazebo, Fisheye Fantasea and Jackson Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, 3-tank dives each day and 2 new Newton dive boats. **Booking office** ▶ Reef Fantaseas, (800) 327-3835. **Best buy** ▶ 7-night, all-inclusive dive packages, from \$1,560 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Little Cayman Beach Resort.

Sam McCoy's Diving Lodge

Box 12, North Side, Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 626-0496, (345) 948-0026, fax (345) 948-0057, e-mail: mccoymc@candw.ky, internet: www.cayman.com.ky/com/sam **Dives** ▶ Sites around Little Cayman, including Bloody Bay and Jackson Walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced native divemasters. **Booking office** ▶ Ultimate Dive Travel, (800) 737-DIVE. **Best buy** ▶ \$159 per person includes accommodations, diving, three meals, room tax, gratuities. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sam McCoy's Diving Lodge.

Southern Cross Club

Box 44, Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 899-2582, (345) 948-1099, fax (619) 563-1665, e-mail: scc@candw.ky, internet: www.scubacentral.com/scc.html **Dives** ▶ Bloody Bay, Jackson Bay, all sites on Little Cayman. **What sets them apart** ▶ Gourmet food in an intimate island setting, 10 divers max. on boats, on-site dock, resort right on beach. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, six 2-tank dives, all meals, airport transfers, bicycles, beach towels, \$1,120 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Southern Cross Club.

READER RATINGS/LITTLE CAYMAN

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
QUALITY OF WALLS											97.8
HEALTH OF REEFS											93.0
PHOTOGRAPHY											92.6
ADVANCED DIVING											90.4
FISH LIFE											86.2
VALUE											85.8
BEGINNER DIVING											81.8
SNORKELING											63.6
BIG ANIMALS											60.8
SHORE DIVING											55.8

Costa Rica

In the last five years, Costa Rica has emerged from dive-tourism obscurity to become one of the hottest new destinations in the world. From Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast across to Guanacaste on the Pacific, Costa Rica is still a watery wilderness. Most of the new dive operations have set up on the Pacific coast, where there are no coral reefs, but where abundant tropicals, sharks and

rays clutter rocky ledges under water. Diver favorites include the Gulf of Papagayo in the northwest, the Osa Peninsula in the southwest and Cocos Island, a 300-mile live-aboard trek offshore.

Weather

Mild year-round, with temperatures rarely exceeding 90F in summer or dipping below 75F in winter. The rainy season in most regions of Costa Rica stretches from May to November.

Average Water Temp

Dependably constant in the Caribbean,

One minute you're stepping off the plane and the next minute, it seems, you're stepping into the clearest, warmest water in the Caribbean. That's Sunset House, and that's why divers have been coming back again and again since 1958. Back then, when Hebe Connors first opened her little hotel on the west shore of Grand Cayman, she had the pick of the Island's prime shore diving sites. And she chose well.

You fly in, check in and dive in. You can't beat Sunset House.



Main photo: David Wolfe. U/W photo: Cathy Church



Sunset House is just five minutes from town with a teeming reef that starts right at the water's edge and a front row view of the setting sun. Other hotels simply can't match it. Of course, things are a touch more sophisticated these days. Along with a fleet of seven custom-built dive boats, you'll now find 59 rooms, a dive shop, a boutique, a restaurant and what many locals say is the Island's best bar. Plus, Cathy Church's world-famous Photo Center is at Sunset House. So check-in with us for an unbeatable dive vacation. Call 1-800-854-4767 or 809-949-7111 (8am-5pm EST). Or write Sunset House, PO Box 79, Grand Cayman, BWI. CIW&A

SUNSET HOUSE
GRAND CAYMAN'S HOTEL FOR DIVERS BY DIVERS

CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ranging from 78F in winter to 82F in summer. Expect water on the Pacific side to be a few degrees cooler, with some chilling thermoclines.

Visibility

Water clarity is extremely variable with location, ranging from 20 feet at inshore sites on a bad day to over 100 feet at off-shore sites on a good day.

Getting There

Ten airlines offer service from the United States to Costa Rica from major cities, including Miami, New York, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans, Washington, Dallas, Denver and San Francisco. After arriving in San Jose, expect at least a half-day of travel to any of the major dive areas.

Diving

At a site called The Arches in the Gulf of Papagayo, you'll find a 13-foot-tall, 25-foot-long passageway, as well as schooling grunts and cortez angels. The volcanic mounds and canyons of Caño

5 days diving, lodging, transfers, meals, taxes, \$1,326 per person until September.

Bill Beard's Diving Safaris de Costa Rica

PO Box 121-5019, Playa del Coco, Costa Rica, (800) 779-0055, (011) 506-670-0012, fax (011) 506-670-0012, e-mail: billbeards@netrunner.net **Dives** ▶ Pacific northwest region of Costa Rica, including Bat and Catalina Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Packages with 7 resorts in area, day tours to volcanos, rainforest, jungle tours, river rafting, horseback riding, 3 large covered dive boats. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive and Adventure Travel (800-938-9767), Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, Tropical Adventures Travel, Ultimate Dive Travel (800-737-3483). **Best buy** ▶ 7-day package, 5 days of diving, \$496 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Sol Playa Hermosa.

El Ocotal Diving Safaris

PO Box 1, Playa del Coco, Guanacaste, Costa Rica, (011) 506-670-0321, fax (011) 506-670-0083, e-mail: elocotal@sol.racsa.co.cr, internet: www.centralamerica.com/cr/hotel/ocodive.htm **Dives** ▶ Gulf of Papagayo, Bat Islands, Catalina Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 32-foot dive boats, max. 10 divers per boat, emphasis on customer service. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Tours, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, Ocean Connections, Poseidon Venture Tours, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 6 nights, 5 days diving, 6 breakfasts, \$495 per diver, \$290 per nondiver, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Ocotal.

J. D.'s Watersports

1115 11th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631, (970) 356-1028, fax (970) 352-6324, e-mail: jdwater@sol.racsa.co.cr, internet: www.centralamerica.com/cr/tours/jdscuba.htm **Dives** ▶ Central-Pacific coast of Costa Rica. **What sets them apart** ▶ Central location, variety of activities, full-service PADI operation, emphasis on safety. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Dive Tours & Travel, Adventure Tours (410-785-3500), Armadillo Tours, Caribbean Collection (813-935-8892), Costa Rica Outdoors (800-308-3394), Oceans of Diving (800-466-1400). **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, transfers, taxes, 3 days diving, jungle river cruise, \$596 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Punta Leona Hotel

Mario Vargas Expeditions

PO Box 194, Playas del Coco, Guanacaste, Costa Rica, (011) 506-670-0351, fax (011) 506-670-0351 **Dives** ▶ Bahia Culebra, Catalina Islands, Bat Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, personal service, 40-foot dive yacht. **Best buy** ▶ 6 days, 5 nights, 4 days diving, 2 dives daily, standard room, breakfast, all taxes, \$395 per person, dbl. occ.

Rich Coast Diving Co.

P.O. Box 005, Playa del Coco, Costa Rica 5019, (800) 4-DIVING, (011) 506-670-0176, fax (011) 506-670-0176, e-mail: scuba@divcostarica.com, internet: www.divcostarica.com **Dives** ▶ Gulf of Papagayo, Bat Islands, Catalina Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal diving experience, small groups, travel assistance and arrangements, 35-foot trimaran. **Booking office** ▶ Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 7 nights, 5 days of diving, 2-tank dives, equipment, room and breakfast, \$399.

Caribbean encompasses such diving jewels as Saba, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Tobago.

Weather

Temperatures are nearly perfect year-round, rarely dipping below 70F in winter or rising above 90F in summer. Sometimes cool at night, especially in the higher elevations of mountainous islands, expect tropical showers throughout the year.

Average Water Temp

Comfortable year-round, averaging 78F in the winter and 82F in the summer.

Visibility

Excellent throughout the archipelago. Expect 80 to 100 feet in most places, though runoff from rivers on some islands can muddy the waters.

Getting There

A number of North American and European carriers fly to the Eastern Caribbean, including American Airlines, Continental Airlines, US Airways, Air Canada, Air France, ALM, British Airways, BWIA, KLM. LIAT and Windward Island Airways also offers inter-island jumps.

Diving

Barbados is probably best known by wreck divers for the 360-foot Greek freighter *Stavronikita*, but it also boasts some awesome reefs; pinnacles like Soufriere on Dominica are a favorite among macro photographers; the island's altitude combined with challenging dives make sites like Tent Reef on Saba all the more rewarding for advanced divers.

DIVE OPERATORS

ANGUILLA

The Dive Shop/Anguilla Ltd.

PO Box 247, The Valley, Anguilla, (809) 497-2020, fax (809) 497-5125, e-mail: peabodyt@candw.com.ai **Dives** ▶ Wrecks and reefs off the northern coast of Anguilla. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star facility, Platinum Pro 5000 instructor. **Best buy** ▶ 6 dives, \$240; 8 dives, \$305; 10 dives, \$360; 12 dives, \$410; 14 dives, \$450; 16 dives, \$480.

ANTIGUA

Dive Antigua

Rex Halcyon Cove Resort, Box 251, St. John's, Antigua, (268) 462-3483, fax (268) 462-7787, e-mail: birkj@candw.ag **Dives** ▶ Ariadne Shoals and Mike's Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Private, unmarked dive sites, exploratory dives, marine biology dives. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Rex Halcyon Cove Resort.

Dockyard Divers

Box 184, St. John's, Antigua, (809) 460-1178, fax (809) 460-1179 **Dives** ▶ Antigua's south coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ 15 dive sites within one mile of shop, large retail outlet. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 6 nights, 10 dives, beach cottage, \$550 per person, dbl. occ.

Jolly Dive

Club Antigua, PO Box 744, St. John's, Antigua, (268) 462-0061, ext. 149, fax (268) 462-8305 **Dives** ▶ Cades Reef,

READER RATINGS/COSTA RICA										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING										71.2
BIG ANIMALS										69.4
FISH LIFE										69.2
HEALTH OF REEFS										62.4
VALUE										61.2
PHOTOGRAPHY										56.2



Island off the Osa Peninsula are patrolled by whitetip reef and bull sharks. And a half-mile off Cocos Island's northwest corner, Dirty Rock features eagle rays and hawksbill turtles soaring in the gaps and gorges created by a slope of monstrous boulders. Also be on the lookout for the Cocos's trademark animal encounter: schooling hammerhead sharks.

DIVE OPERATORS

Aguila de Osa Inn

Drake Bay, Osa Peninsula, Puntarenas, Costa Rica, (011) 506-296-2190, fax (011) 506-232-7722, e-mail: aguila@sol.racsa.co.cr, internet: www.centralamerica.com/cr/hotel/aguila **Dives** ▶ Caño Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Attention to detail, personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Dive Travel (800-938-9767). **Aqua-notes** (011-03-3796-7841), Bahia Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights,

Eastern Caribbean

A string of pearls stretching more than 500 miles from the Virgin Islands to Venezuela, the Eastern



READER RATINGS/DOMINICA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
BEGINNER DIVING											88.6
PHOTOGRAPHY											88.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											86.8
ADVANCED DIVING											84.8
VALUE											84.6
SNORKELING											76.6
FISH LIFE											76.0
QUALITY OF WALLS											73.8
SHORE DIVING											57.8

Antigua, English Harbor. **What sets them apart** ▶ Instruction, multilingual staff. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 10 dives, includes equipment, \$345.

Pirate Divers

Box 155, St. John's, Antigua, (809) 462-6322, fax (809) 462-0751 **Dives** ▶ Northeast Antigua. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, caters to small groups, 6 divers max. **Best buy** ▶ 5 2-tank dives, room, tax, \$725.

BARBADOS

Coral Isle Divers

Cavans Lane, Bridgetown, Barbados, (800) 513-5840, (246) 431-9068, fax (246) 431-9068 e-mail: coralisle@caribnet.net internet: www.caribnet.net/coral_isle/ **Dives** ▶ Barbados's west and south coasts. **What sets them apart** ▶ Close to dive sites, pier-side docking, 40-foot power catamaran dive boat, nitrox training and facilities, equipment sales. **Booking office** ▶ USA Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 6 dives, transfers, \$369 per person.

The Dive Shop

P.O. Box 448, Pebbles Beach, St. Michael, Barbados, (800) 513-5823, (246) 426-9947, fax (246) 426-2031, e-mail: hardive@caribnet.net, internet: www.caribnet.net/dive_shop/ **Dives** ▶ Castle Bank, The Muff, various wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, computer-friendly. **Booking office** ▶ USA Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ Unlimited diving, boat dives, equipment, accommodations, \$519.

Exploresub Barbados Ltd.

St. Lawrence Gap, Christchurch, Barbados, (246) 435-6542, fax (246) 435-8214, e-mail: x-sub@caribsurf.com, internet: www.world-traveler.com/barbados/explore.

html **Dives** ▶ South and west coasts of Barbados. **What sets them apart** ▶ Eco-dives, wreck, reef and drift diving. **Best buy** ▶ \$217-\$271 per night, dbl. occ., includes accommodations, diving, transfers, free camera rental, service charges and tax.

Hightide Watersports

Sandy Lane Hotel, St. James, Barbados, (800) 513-5763, (246) 432-0931, fax (246) 432-0931, e-mail: hightide@sunbeach.net, internet: www.gti.net/hightide **Dives** ▶ Variety of sites from north to south. **What sets them apart** ▶ High staff-to-diver ratio, personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ SC Travel, USA Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 6 dives, transfers, \$318. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sandy Lane Hotel.

DOMINICA

Dive Castaways

P.O. Box 5, Castaways Beach Hotel, Roseau, Dominica, (888) CASTAWAYS, (809) 449-6244, fax (809) 449-6246, e-mail: castaways@mail.tod.dm, internet: www.delphis.dm/castaways.htm **Dives** ▶ Entire west coast of island, including central, southern and northern sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dominica's only beachfront dive operation, central location. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Landfall Productions, Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas, PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 2-tank dives, 1 night dive, full breakfast and dinner, tennis, kayaking, government tax, \$925 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Castaways Beach Hotel.

Dive Dominica

Castle Comfort Lodge, Box 2253, Roseau, Dominica, (888) 262-6611, (809) 448-2188, fax (809) 448-6088, e-mail: dive@tod.dm, internet: www.delphis.dm/dive.html **Dives** ▶ Scotts Head Pinnacle, Condo, Dangleben's Pinnacles, La Bim, Village, Coral Gardens.

What sets them apart ▶ 13 years in business, custom-built dive boats, personal service.

Booking offices ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Landfall Productions, PADI Travel Network, Paradise Expedition (800-696-5880 or 201-696-5880), Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, includes breakfast, dinner, 10 dives, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, transfers, service charges and tax, \$906 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Castle Comfort Lodge.

East Carib Dive

Box 375, Roseau, Dominica, (809) 449-6575, fax (809) 449-6575 **Dives** ▶ Dominica's west-central coast, day trips to the north and south. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, uncrowded boats. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Nature Island Dive

Box 2354, Soufriere, St. Mark, Dominica, (809) 449-8181, fax (809) 449-8182, e-mail: walshs@tod.dm, internet: www.delphis.dm/nid.htm

Dives ▶ Soufriere, Scotts Head Marine Reserve, Labim, Champagne and Coral Gardens. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, caters to small groups, variety of water and land sports, including kayaking and mountain biking. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 10 dives, seaside cottage, half-day biking, kayaking, airport transfers, \$1,750.

GRENADA

Dive Grenada

Box 71, St. George's, Grenada, (800) 843-8362, (809) 444-1092, fax (809) 440-6699, e-mail: diveg'da@caribsurf.com, internet: www.divegrenada.com **Dives** ▶ Leeward side of Grenada (15-20 minute boat ride). **What sets them apart** ▶ Day trips to isolated spots in the north, 7 years experience, equipment rentals included. **Booking office** ▶ Scuba Mart Inc. **Best buy** ▶ 2 1-tank dives, one-day accommodations, \$100.

Grand Anse Aquatics

Coyaba Beach Resort, Grenada, (809) 444-1046, fax (809) 444-4188 **Dives** ▶ Bianca C, other reefs and wrecks around Grenada. **Best buy** ▶ 20 percent off accommodations at Coyaba Beach Hotel when diving with Grand Anse Aquatics, reservations must be made through dive shop. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Coyaba Beach Resort.

GUADELOUPE

Les Heures Saines

Le Rocher de Malendure, 97132 Bouillante, Guadeloupe, FWI, (011) 590-988663, fax (011) 590-987776, internet: www.97132-pigeon-guadeloupe **Dives** ▶ Cousteau Underwater Park, dive sites around the Pigeon Islands, Les Saintes. **What sets them apart** ▶ Three dive boats. **Booking office** ▶ Ultramarina (011-4089-3444) **Best buy** ▶ Weekly long package available, call for details.

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Phone (809)680-9006



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TOBAGO

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

MARTINIQUE

Club Med/Buccaneers Creek

Martinique, FWI, (800) CLUB-MED internet: www.clubmed.com Dives ► Diamant Rock and Anse D'Arlet. What sets them apart ► 2-day resort classes. Best buy ► 6 dives and equipment, \$65. Resort affiliation ► Club Med Buccaneers Creek.

Planete Bleue Diving

Marina de la Pointe du Bout, Trois Ilets, Martinique, FWI 37229, (011) 596-660879, fax (011) 596-661001 Dives ► Various spots in Martinique, northern and southern Caribbean coasts.

NEVIS

Oualie Beach Hotel/ Scuba Safaris

Oualie Beach, Nevis, (800) OUALIE-1, (869) 469-9733, fax (869) 469-9176, e-mail: oualie@caribsurf.com, internet: www.oualie.com Dives ► Nevis. What sets them apart ► Only shop on island. Booking offices ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Into the Blue, Landfall Productions, Rothschild Dive Safaris. Best buy ► 7 nights, 5 days of diving, \$680 per person. Resort affiliation ► Oualie Beach Hotel.

SABA

Saba Deep Dive Center

P.O. Box 22, Fort Bay, Saba, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 222-0578, (011) 5994-63347, fax (011) 5994-63397, e-mail: diving@sabadeep.com, internet: www.sabadeep.com/~diving Dives ► Saba Marine Park, pinnacles, walls and reefs. What sets them apart ► Offers small groups and personalized service from instructors and divemasters. Booking office ► Saba Dive Travel (800-883-SABA). Best buy ► 4 nights, 6 dives, cottage accommodations, \$587.

Saba Reef Divers

Windwardside, Saba, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 5994-62541, fax (011) 5994-62653, e-mail: sabadive@aol.com, internet: www.empg.com/sabadive Dives ► Saba Marine Park. What sets them apart ► PADI certifications, ANDI training facility, nitrox, sea kayaks, rebreather courses. Booking offices ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Rothschild Dive Safaris. Best buy ► 5 nights, 6 dives, marine park fees, transfers, continental breakfast, tax and service charges, \$450 per person, dbl. occ.

Sea Saba Dive Center

P.O. Box 598, Saba, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 883-SABA, (011) 5994-62246, fax (011) 5994-62362, e-mail: seasaba@aol.com, internet: www.3routes.com/scuba/seasaba.html Dives ► Saba Marine Park, pinnacles, new sites on windward side. What sets them apart ► Two 38-foot covered dive boats with sundecks and shade, small dive groups (10-12 divers max.), an experienced all-instructor crew, freedom for experienced divers. Booking offices ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, Dive Saba Travel. Best buy ► 8 days, 10 dives, daily breakfast and lunch, 3 nights dinner, transfers, taxes, marine park fees, \$781 per person, dbl. occ.

ST. BARTHELEMY

St. Barth Diving Center Marine Service

Quai Yacht Club, Gustavia, St. Barthelemy, FWI 97133, (011) 590-277034, fax (011) 590-277036 Dives ► Pain de Sucre, Grosivets, Petits Saints, Colombier and more than 15 different sites and various wrecks. What sets them apart ► Uncrowded dive boats, personal service, guided tours, 4 departures daily. Best buy ► 10 dives, gear, accommodations, \$600.

READER RATINGS/SABA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING											85.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											84.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											83.2
VALUE											81.0
FISH LIFE											75.8
QUALITY OF WALLS											73.8
BEGINNER DIVING											62.0
BIG ANIMALS											56.4
QUALITY OF WRECKS											51.0

READER RATINGS/ST. KITTS & NEVIS

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
VALUE											82.0
PHOTOGRAPHY											80.6
HEALTH OF REEFS											77.2
ADVANCED DIVING											74.0
FISH LIFE											72.4
BEGINNER DIVING											68.6
QUALITY OF WALLS											63.8
QUALITY OF WRECKS											61.4
SNORKELING											50.0

READER RATINGS/ST. LUCIA

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											85.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											84.4
BEGINNER DIVING											83.4
SNORKELING											83.0
ADVANCED DIVING											78.8
FISH LIFE											78.8
VALUE											78.2
SHORE DIVING											74.8
QUALITY OF WALLS											69.6

West Indies Dive St. Barth

BP 369-97096, St. Barthelemy, FWI, (011) 590-27-9179, fax (011) 590-27-9180, e-mail: 101444.255@compuserve.com, internet: ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/wi_diver Dives ► Saba, St. Barths, St. Maarten. What sets them apart ► Caters to small groups, personal service, new equipment, PADI, CMAS, FFESSM. Booking offices ► Wimco (800-932-3222), St. Barth Properties (800-421-3396). Best buy ► 7 days, 6 nights, transfers, 2 dives/day, night dive, from \$200 per day.

ST. EUSTATIUS

Dive Statia

St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 599-382435, fax (011) 599-382539, internet: www.iland.net/divestatia Dives ► Caribbean and Atlantic sides of St. Eustatius. What sets them apart ► Oldest dive training center and only PADI dive center on island. Booking office ► Dive Statia Travel (800-883-7222). Best buy ► 3 nights, 4 dives, accommodations, 1 meal, taxes and service charges, transfers, \$242.

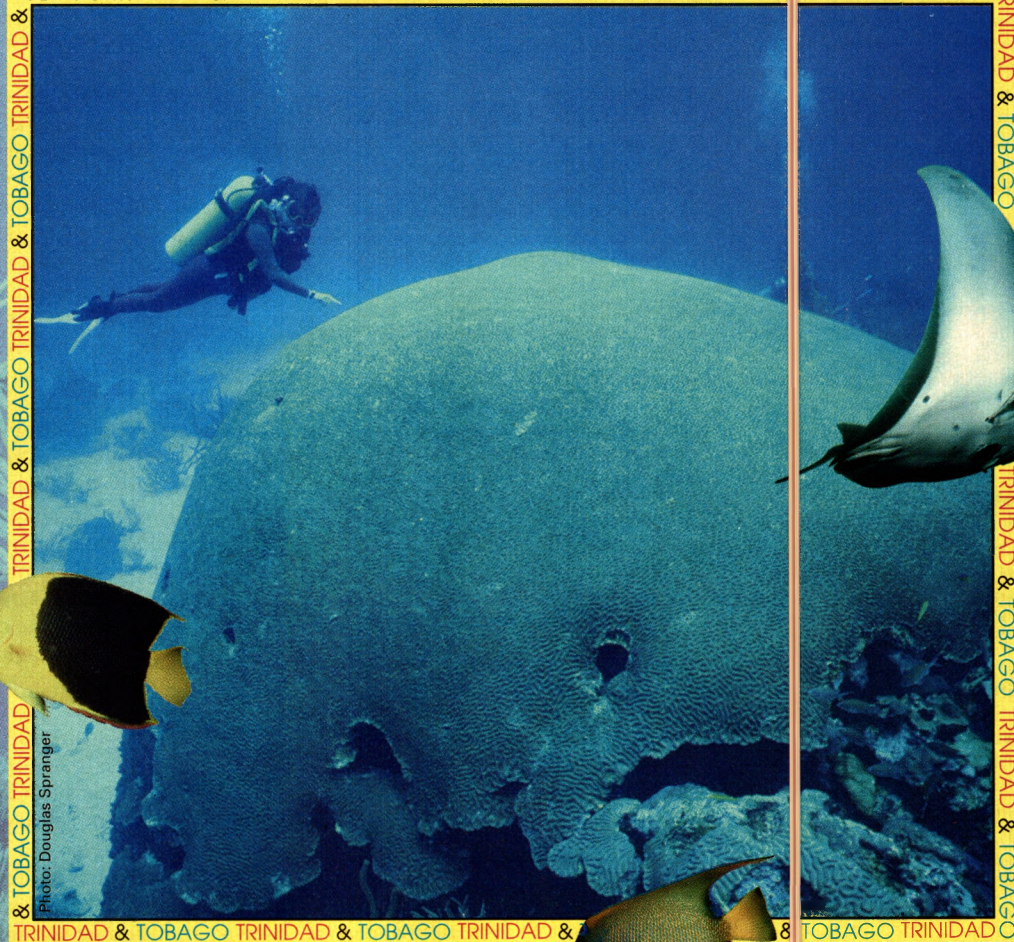
Golden Rock Dive Center

PO Box 93, St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles, (800) 311-6658, (011) 5993-82964, internet: www.divetrip.com/goldenrock Dives ► Various wrecks, walls and reefs. What sets them apart ► New equipment, comfortable dive boats, personal service. Booking offices ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Dive Saba Travel, Landfall Productions. Best buy ► 7 days, 7 nights, accommodations, 15 boat dives, breakfast, \$749.

ST. KITTS

St. Kitts Scuba

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St. Kitts, (800) 621-1270, (809) 465-8914, fax (809) 699-7583, e-mail: birdrock@caribbeans.com, internet: www.caribbeans.com **Dives** ▶ St. Kitts and Nevis sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced staff, new boats and equipment. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Info Office, Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ \$599/diver, \$299/nondiver includes 7 nights, 6 days diving, 1 night dive, transfers, tax, service charges. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bird Rock Beach Hotel.

ST. LUCIA

Dive Fair Helen/

St. Lucia Undersea Adventures
Box 188, Vigie Marina, Castries, St. Lucia, (800) 327-8150, (758) 451-7716, fax (758) 453-6512, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/stlucia.htm **Dives** ▶ Anse Cochon, Pinnacles, Gros Piton, Anse Chastanet. **What sets them apart** ▶ Half-day tours, including 2 dives, and video/photos of your dive on request. **Booking office** ▶ Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, transfers, room taxes and gratuities, 3 meals daily, unlimited wine and bar drinks, 5 2-tank dives, use of all facilities, \$1,165; airfare available. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Wyndham Morgan Bay Resort.

Scuba St. Lucia

St. Lucia, (800) 223-1108, (758) 459-7000, fax (758) 459-7700 **Dives** ▶ Pitons, Soufrière Marine Management Area, various wrecks and walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Multilingual staff, large dive boats, proximity to marine reserves. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, PADI Travel Network, Sand Dollar Tours (800-397-2674). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 12 boat or beach dives, transfers, all meals, snorkeling, watersports, tennis, \$1,249-\$1,399 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Anse Chastanet.

St. Lucia/Club Aquarius

P.O. Box 246, Vieux Fort, St. Lucia, (809) 454-6546, fax (809) 454-6017 **Dives** ▶ Petit and Gros Piton, Soufrière Marine Management Area. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers 2-day resort classes, drift, night and wreck dives, babysitting. **Best buy** ▶ 10 dives, \$230. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Club Aquarius St. Lucia.

ST. MAARTEN

Ocean Explorers Dive Center

Simpson Bay Beach, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 599-545252, fax (011) 599-545252, internet: www.vom.com/catman **Dives** ▶ Reefs and wrecks south of St. Maarten, 20 sites ranging from 20 to 110 feet. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, owners are instructors, 15 years experience in St. Maarten. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, accommodations, 5 dives, \$400.

Trade Winds Dive Center

Great Bay Marina (behind Chesterfield), Philipsburg, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, (011) 599-575176, fax (011) 599-523605 **Dives** ▶ Reefs and wrecks along the southern and eastern coasts of St. Maarten. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers close locations to cruise ship terminals, guided tour dives in small groups and a friendly dive staff. **Best buy** ▶ 10-dive package w/equipment provided, \$250.

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

Dive Bequia

P.O. Box 16, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, (800) 328-2288, (809) 458-3504, fax (809) 458-3886, e-mail: bob.sax@caribsurf.com, internet: www.empg.com/dive **Dives** ▶ Various sites around Bequia within a 10-minute boat ride. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 custom-built dive boats, 16 passengers, flexible dive schedules. **Booking office** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary: dive gear, taxes, service, accom-

modations at Gingerbread, \$699 per person, per week, or \$629 at apartments. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Gingerbread.

Dive St. Vincent

P.O. Box 864, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, (809) 457-4928, fax (809) 457-4948, e-mail: bill2s@caribsurf.com, internet: www.divestvincent.com **Dives** ▶ St. Vincent's southwest coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced staff. **Booking office** ▶ Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 8 days, 10 dives, all equipment, airport transfers and hotel, \$599.

Grenadines Dive

Clifton, Union Island, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, (809) 458-8138, fax (809) 458-8122 **Dives** ▶ Tobago Cays, Horse Shoe Reef, Mayreau Garden, Palm Island, *Puruniwreck*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on customer service, yacht rendezvous, colorful drift dives. **Booking office** ▶ Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for details.

Petit Byahaut

Petit Byahaut, St. Vincent, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, (809) 457-7008, fax (809) 457-7008, e-mail: petitbyahaut@outahere.com, internet: www.outahere.com/petitbyahaut **Dives** ▶ St. Vincent's leeward coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers a secluded 50-acre nature resort with private beach, shore dives and short boat rides. **Best buy** ▶ 5-night dive package, \$920-\$1,020.

Sunsports

Box 1, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, (800) 525-3833, (809) 458-3577, fax (809) 457-3031, e-mail: sunsport@caribsurf.com, internet: vincy.com/sunsport.htm **Dives** ▶ Boulder, Devil's Table and L'anse Chemin. **What sets them apart** ▶ 11 PADI specialties, medic first aid. **Booking offices** ▶ Into the Blue, Landfall Productions, PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 10-dive package, \$555.

TOBAGO

Aquamarine Dive Ltd.

Blue Waters Inn, Speyside, Tobago, Trinidad & Tobago, (800) 6-GET-WET, (809) 639-4416, fax (809) 639-4416, e-mail: bwitobago@trinidad.net, internet: www.trinidad.net/bwi **Dives** ▶ Speyside, Flying Manta, Coral Gardens, Book Ends, Cathedral, Japanese Gardens. **What sets them apart** ▶ Fast boats, resort on-site, modern equipment, caters to all levels of divers. **Booking offices** ▶ Into the Blue, Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas.

Diamond Divers

Grafton Beach Resort, Black Rock, Tobago, (800) 655-1214, (809) 639-0191, fax (809) 639-0030, e-mail: grafton@trinidad.net, internet: www.grandehotels.com **Dives** ▶ Mt. Irvine Wall, Mt. Irvine Extension, Amos Vale Reef, Culloden, Speyside, Sisters, Southside. **What sets them apart** ▶ Resort-run operation, package available, new equipment. **Booking offices** ▶ Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas, Caradonna Caribbean Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 6 days, accommodations, daily breakfast buffet, transfers, nightly entertainment, taxes and service charges, \$545.10 per diver, \$326.35 per nondiver, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Grafton Beach Resort.

Dive Tobago Ltd.

P.O. Box 53, Pigeon Pt., Scarborough, Tobago, Trinidad & Tobago, (809) 639-0202, fax (809) 639-2727 e-mail: cohel@tst.net.tt **Dives** ▶ Caribbean, Atlantic, anchor and drift dives. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service.

Man Friday Diving

Windward Rd., Charlotteville, Tobago, Trinidad & Tobago, (809) 660-4676, fax (809) 660-4676 **Dives** ▶ North coast of Tobago, Sisters Rock, St. Giles, King's Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups of 6 divers per boat, uncrowded diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Buddies UK (011-

0717-369031), Dive Quest UK (011-01254-826322), Pan Caribe Tours (800-525-6896). **Best buy** ▶ 10-dive package, \$325.

Tobago Dive Experience

P.O. Box 115, Scarborough, Tobago, Trinidad & Tobago, (809) 639-7034, fax (809) 639-7034, e-mail: dive.manta@trinidad.net, internet: www.trinidad.net/tobago **Dives** ▶ Northeast end and Caribbean coast of Tobago. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 10 dives, transfers, accommodations, \$699. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Manta Lodge.

Fiji

With waterfalls, lush jungle and pristine beaches, Fiji fits neatly into our postcard notions of a South Seas paradise. The vision continues below water, where neon-colored soft corals light up the seafloor. Formed by volcanoes that run along a seam between two tectonic plates, Fiji boasts fringing reefs that drop a half-mile or more straight from the surface. Simmering in the rich upwellings are filter-feeding corals and sea fans in overwhelming profusion and a riotous selection of colors.

Weather

Expect optimum conditions here in the Southern Hemisphere from March to December, with the calmest seas found in April and May. January and February tend to be iffy, with the highest temperatures, but also the most rainfall.

Average Water Temp

From a low of 75F in the coolest months (June to October) to a high of 84F in January and February.

Visibility

Expect triple-digit vis June through October, the coolest months. Plankton blooms and rainfall can lower visibility from November to February.

Getting There

Nadi Airport on Viti Levu is a major South Pacific hub, and several airlines service it, including Qantas Airways, Air New Zealand, Air Vanuatu, Air Nauru, Air Marshall Islands, Solomon Airlines and Fiji's national carrier, Air Pacific. Air Fiji, Sunflower Airlines and Vanua Air offer inter-island hops.

Diving

Pink, yellow, red and white corals are interspersed with huge purple, tan and green sea fans at sites in Beqa Lagoon. A pinnacle called Magic Mountain rises from 90 feet to within 10 feet of the surface off Vanua Levu, covered head to toe with hard and soft corals which attract colorful anthias and baitfish. The Great White Wall is Fiji's best-known dive site—an embankment that is cloaked in pale soft corals starting in 75 feet of water and continuing down into Somosomo Strait.



DIVE OPERATORS

Aqua-Trek Garden Island Resort
PO Box 1, Waiyevo, Taveuni, Fiji Islands, (800) 541-4334, (011) 679-880286, fax (011) 679-880288, e-mail: info@aquatrek.com, internet: www.aquatrek.com
Dives ▶ Rainbow Reef, Somosomo Strait, Taveuni. **What sets them apart** ▶ 10-15 minutes to Great White Wall and other sites on Rainbow Reef, personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Aqua-Trek USA. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 10 dives, 3 meals, \$799 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Garden Island Resort.

Aqua-Trek Mana Island
PO Box 10215, Nadi Airport, Fiji Islands, (800) 541-4334, (011) 679-702413, fax (011) 679-702412, e-mail: info@aquatrek.com, internet: www.aquatrek.com
Dives ▶ Supermarket, Gotham City, Picnic Point, Mamanucas, Mana Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers more than 30 dive sites, including walls, pinnacles and shark encounters, two locations in Nadi, PADI 5-Star IDC, ANDI nitrox instructor training facility. **Booking office** ▶ Aqua-Trek USA.

Beachcomber Island & Subsurface

Box 1626, Lautoka, Fiji Islands, (800) 521-7242, (213) 256-1991, fax (213) 256-0647, e-mail: unirep@earthlink.net
Dives ▶ Mamanuca Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Nitrox, shark encounters, wreck dives, fast boats. **Booking office** ▶ Unirep. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, beachfront bure, all meals, unlimited diving, transfers, FJ\$1,116 twin share.

Beqa Divers Fiji

GPO Box 777, Suva, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-361088, fax (011) 679-361047
Dives ▶ Beqa Lagoon, Side Streets, Soft Coral Grotto, Caesar's Rocks, Coral Gardens, various tunnels and wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom-designed dive boats with easy water entry and exit, PADI 5-star IDC, Fiji's first dive operation. **Booking office** ▶ Adventure Express, Scuba Dreams (800-346-6116), Scubahire Ltd. (011-679-361088), Waterways. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days diving, transfers, breakfast daily, lunch onboard, 18 holes golf, diver share basis, fax for details.

Castaway Island

Private Mail Bag, Nadi Airport, Nadi, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-661233, fax (011) 679-665753, e-mail: castaway@itraps.com
Dives ▶ Castaway reef system, barrier reef, Mana Island reef, surrounding islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Organization and time management, safety record, 10 minutes by boat to dive sites. **Booking office** ▶ Integrated Travel Resources (800-888-0120). **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights, 10 dives, transfers, \$1,325 twin share.

Crystal Divers

PO Box 55, Lomaloma, Lau, Fiji Islands, (800) 554-2SEA, (011) 679-880446, fax (011) 679-880303, e-mail: crystaldivers@netilus.com, internet: www.netilus.com/crystaldivers
Dives ▶ Northern Lau group, Vanu. **What sets them apart** ▶ Previously unexplored area, abundant marine life. **Booking office** ▶ Sea Hunt Escapes (800-554-2SEA or 415-566-6672). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days diving, \$1,685.

Dive Connections Fiji Ltd.

Villa 16, River Dr., Pacific Harbour, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-

FIJI

450541, fax (011) 679-450539
Dives ▶ Beqa Lagoon and Frigate's Passage. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers safe and professional diving services. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Discovery, Inter-Ocean Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 2 days diving, 4 tanks, all gear, 1 night accommodation, \$230.

Dive Kadavu

PO Box 8, Vunisea, Kadavu, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-311780, fax (011) 679-303860, e-mail: kadavu@fors terco.com.au
Dives ▶ Namalata and Astrolabe Reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Two custom-built dive boats, full-service dive shop, 30 moored sites within 15 minutes. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ For groups of 8 to 12, \$875 per person includes accommodations, 5 days of 2-tank dives, transfers, 1 person per group free.

Dive Kontiki

Private Mail Bag, Savusavu, Fiji Islands, (800) 372-8213, (011) 679-850352, fax (011) 679-850355
Dives ▶ Savusavu Barrier Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers quick rides to dive sites (5-10 minutes). **Booking office** ▶ Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights accommodations (twin share), 6 days of 2-tank dives, meals, FJ\$600. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Kontiki Resort.

Dive Taveuni Resort

Matei, Taveuni, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-880441, fax (011) 679-880466
Dives ▶ Rainbow Reef, Somo Somo Straits, the Great White Wall and more than 25 other sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to beginners and advanced. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Inter-Ocean, Landfall Productions, Sea Fiji, See & Sea Travel, Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji, Tropical Adventures Travel (800-976-5732). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days diving, all meals, transfers, tax, \$1,595 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Dive Taveuni Resort.

Eco Divers-Tours

PO Box 264, Savusavu, Fiji Islands, (800) 599-5507, (011) 679-850122, fax (011) 679-850344, e-mail: seafijidive@is.com.fj internet: www.fijifvb.gov.fj/ecodiver/ecodiver.htm
Dives ▶ Outer reefs, Taveuni, Savusavu Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Expedition-style diving, 2 fast Zodiacs, 21 moored sites, eco-cultural tours, mountain biking, kayaking expeditions. **Booking offices** ▶ Sea Fiji Travel (800-854-3454), Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 10 tanks, transfers, 7 breakfasts, from \$341.80 per person, dbl. occ.

Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort

Vanua Levu, Fiji, (800) 246-3454, (011) 679-850188, fax (011) 679-850340, e-mail: jmcfr@aol.com
Dives ▶ Savusavu Bay, Somosomo Strait, 13 dive sites total. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI certifications, resort courses, referrals, E-6 processing. **Best buys** ▶ 2-tank dive, \$99. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort.

Kaimbu Island Resort

Kaimbu Island, Fiji Islands, (800) 473-0332, (011) 679-880333, fax (011) 679-880334
Dives ▶ 14-mile reef surrounding Kaimbu and Yacata islands, Lau Group. **What sets them apart** ▶ Remote diving, 6 divers max., variety of dives, novice thru advanced, variety of activities. **Best buy** ▶ \$995 per couple, per night includes accommodations, meals, beverages, all activities, plus 10% tax; whole island may be rented for \$2,500 plus 10% tax per night. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Kaimbu Island Resort.

Marlin Bay Resort

11498 Pierce St., Riverside, CA 92505, (800) 542-3454, (909) 353-2700, fax (011) 679-304028, e-mail: marlinbay-reservation@worldnet.ATT.com, internet: www.marlinbay.com
Dives ▶ Beqa Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only resort in Beqa Lagoon (famous for soft corals), voted Top 10 best dive operators in *Rodale's Scuba Diving*. **Booking offices**

DIVE & TREK IN FIJI

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READER RATINGS/FIJI

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
PHOTOGRAPHY											82.1
HEALTH OF REEFS											90.2
ADVANCED DIVING											89.5
FISH LIFE											88.2
VALUE											84.5
QUALITY OF WALLS											79.8
SNORKELING											76.5
BEGINNER DIVING											83.7
BIG ANIMALS											58.8
SHORE DIVING											58.3

► Island Dreams, Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ► 7 days, 6 2-tank dives, meals, deluxe beachfront bungalow, \$1,250. **Resort affiliation** ► Marlin Bay Resort.

Matagi Island Resort

Waiyevo, Taveuni, Fiji Islands, (800) 3-MATAGI, (714) 379-8060, fax (714) 379-8061 e-mail: info@matagi.com internet: www.matagi.com **Dives** ► Matagi Island area.

What sets them apart ► Private, family-owned island with 2 day dive boats, 24 guests max. **Booking offices** ► Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, Poseidon Venture Tours, Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji, Tropical Adventures Travel, U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 5 days diving, all meals, nonalcoholic drinks, \$1,550 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ► Matagi Island Resort.

Moody's Namena

c/o Private Mailbag, Savusavu, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-813764, fax (011) 679-812366 **Dives** ► Namena Barrier Reef, Grand Canyon, the Pillars, Cascades, Four Sisters, Manta Mount. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service. **Booking office** ► Dive Discovery, Tropical Inspirations (800-976-5732). **Best buy** ► 5 nights, 4 days diving, \$1,136 per diver; 5 nights, \$800 per nondriver.

Nukubalavu Resort & Dive Center

PO Box 11522, Suva, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-314554, fax (011) 679-302212, e-mail: nukubalavu@is.com.fj, internet: www.fijifvb.gov.fj/fijibd/accom/outeris/nukubala.htm **Dives** ► Great Astrolabe Reef. **What sets them apart** ► Eco-tourist resort with solar power, true Fijian experience. **Booking offices** ► Adventure Express, Fiji Travel (800-500-FIJI). **Best buy** ► 1 week, 10 dives, standard bure, meals, \$800. **Resort affiliation** ► Nukubalavu Resort.

Rainbow Reef Divers

PO Box 1, Waiyevo, Taveuni, Fiji Islands, (800) 541-4334, (011) 679-880286, fax (011) 679-880288, e-mail: garden@is.com.fj, internet: www.aquatrek.com **Dives** ► Somosomo Straits, Rainbow Reef, Great White Wall. **What sets them apart** ► Close to dive sites, emphasis on service, 2 custom-built 30-foot boats. **Booking offices** ► Aqua-Trek USA, Island Dreams, Poseidon Venture Tours, Sportours, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 3 meals daily, 10 dives, \$899 sgl. occ., \$799 dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ► Garden Island Resort.

Vatulele Island Resort

PO Box 9936, Nadi Airport, Nadi, Fiji Islands, (800) 828-9146, (011) 612-9326-1055, fax (011) 612-9327-2764, e-mail: vatu@magna.com.au, internet: www.vatulele.com **Dives** ► Vatulele Island, surrounding islets. **What sets them apart** ► Only operator on island, PADI resort, all dive sites within 15 minutes of resort. **Booking offices** ► Integrated Travel Resources (800-888-0120), Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ► 6 nights accommodations, meals, beverages, transfers, diving, festival participation fees, \$7,320 per couple. **Resort affiliation** ► Vatulele Island Resort.

Florida Keys

The Florida Keys offer North America's only drive-to tropical diving on more than 100 miles of coral reefs tended by your choice of more than 50 dive operators. From the hard-core gotta-get-wet-today dive-aholism of Key Largo to the off-center ambience of Key West, you've got to love a place that has more dive boats than police cars.

Weather

Mild year-round. In winter, daytime temps can dip into the 50Fs. Hot, humid summers are moderated by ocean breezes.

Average Water Temp

Upper 70Fs to low 80Fs in summer, lower 70Fs in winter.

Visibility

Variable, but averages 40 to 70 feet. Calm days are clear, but wind and waves can reduce vis dramatically.

Diving

The spur-and-groove formations at Key Largo's The Elbow have been snaring ships for hundreds of years, and now host angelfish, grunts and snapper among the nautical remains. Dive sites along Marathon's Sombrero Reef are known for VW-sized mounds of brain coral and archways filled with fish. The Keys' signature reef is Looe Key, where the healthiest and tallest ridges of coral in the islands are topped by sea fans, sponges and sea rods.

DIVE OPERATORS

BIG PINE KEY

Underseas Inc.

MM 30.5, US 1, PO Box 430319, Big Pine Key, FL 33043, (800) 446-5663, (305) 872-2700, fax (305) 872-0080, e-mail: diveuseas@aol.com **Dives** ► Looe Key NMS. **What sets them apart** ► Morning and afternoon dive and snorkel trips, 27 years experience, personal service, nitrox courses and fills. **Best buy** ► \$66 per person, per day, includes lodging, dive trip, continental breakfast.

DUCK KEY

Abyss Pro Dive Center

Hawk's Cay Resort, MM 61, Duck Key, FL 33050, (800) 432-2242, ext. 3717, (305) 289-4433, fax (305) 743-3198, e-mail: abyssdive@aol.com **What sets them apart** ► Large 34-foot, 6-diver boat, personal attention. **Resort affiliation** ► Hawk's Cay Resort.

ISLAMORADA

Caribbean Watersports at

Cheeca Lodge

Cheeca Lodge, MM 82, Islamorada, FL, (888) SEA-REEF, (305) 664-9547, fax (305) 852-5062, e-mail: cwsports@aol.com **Dives** ► Alligator Reef, Davis, Conch, Aquarium, Eagle wreck. **What sets them apart** ► Cater to individuals, families and corporate clients, 203-room resort, watersports facility, PADI and NAUI certification. **Best buy** ► Standard room, \$230 plus tax. **Resort affiliation** ► Cheeca Lodge.

Lady Cyana Divers, Inc.

MM 85.9, Islamorada, FL 33036, (800) 221-8717, (305) 664-8717, fax (305) 664-4443, e-mail: ladycyana@aol.com **Dives** ► Florida Keys, from Molasses Reef south to Alligator Reef (20 miles), wrecks of the *Duane* and *Eagle*. **What sets them apart** ► PADI 5-star, deeper reef and wreck diving, shallow diving for beginners, custom dive boats, free weekend barbecues, boats and store at same location, snorkeling on some trips, underwater weddings. **Best buy** ► Accommodations, dive trip to 2 locations, tanks, air, weight belts, \$88 per person, per day.

Ocean Quest Dive Center

87000 Overseas Hwy., Islamorada, FL, (800) 356-8798, (305) 852-8770, fax (305) 852-0013, e-mail: matt@oceanquestdivecenter.com, internet: www.oceanquestdivecenter.com **Dives** ► Molasses Reef, *Duane*, *Bibb* and *Eagle* wrecks, Conch, Davis, Crocker and Alligator reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Full-service resort, cater to small groups. **Best buy** ► 5 nights, 5 2-tank trips, tanks and weights, \$284 per person plus tax. **Resort affiliation** ► Plantation Yacht Harbor Resort & Marina.

The Reef Shop

84771 Overseas Hwy., MM 84.7, Islamorada, FL 33036, (800) 741-4385, (305) 664-4385 **Dives** ► Alligator Reef to Conch Reef. **What sets them apart** ► 6 divers max., spearfishing and lobstering.

KEY LARGO

Admiral Dive Center

1 Bowen Dr., Box 0113, MM 105, Bayside, Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 346-3483, (305) 451-1114, fax (305) 451-2731, e-mail: admiral@reefnet.com **Dives** ► Key Largo NMS. **What sets them apart** ► Small groups, rental dive boats, personal instruction at all levels. **Best buy** ► 2 dives, oceanfront accommodations, tanks and weights, \$70 per person, per day. **Resort affiliation** ► Oceanfront Guest House & Cottage Rentals.

American Diving Headquarters, Inc.

MM 105, Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 634-8464, (305) 451-0037, fax (305) 451-9291, e-mail: amdiving@aol.com **Dives** ► Pennekamp State Park, Key Largo NMS, Conch Reef, Conch Wall, *Bibb* and *Duane*. **What sets them apart** ► Oldest dive shop on Key Largo, guarantees dive trips, takes requests for dive sites, flexible schedules. **Best buy** ► Buy 4 dives, including tanks and weights, for \$45, and get a 5th dive for free; custom packages available.

Amy Slate's Amoray Dive Resort

104250 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 426-6729, (305) 451-3595, fax (305) 453-9516, e-mail: amoray@pennekamp.com, internet: www.amoray@pennekamp.com **Dives** ► Upper Keys, Key Largo NMS, Pennekamp Park, Conch Wall, various wrecks. **What sets them apart** ► Family-run resort with custom 45-foot dive catamaran, accom-



modations with pool. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 4 days, 5 reef trips to 2 locations, day diving, accommodations, continental breakfast, tanks and weights, \$331.10 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Amy Slate's Amory Dive Resort.

Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center

51 Garden Cove Dr., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 331-3483, (305) 451-3020, fax (305) 451-9240, e-mail: captslate@reefnet.com, internet: www.pennekamp.com/atlantis **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park, Key Largo NMS, Elbow Reef and various wrecks, Carysfort, *USCGC Duane*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Slate's critter feedings of barracudas and moray eels every Friday morning, underwater weddings, YMCA instructor college. **Booking office** ▶ Atlantis Dive & Travel (305-451-1325). **Best buy** ▶ Dive and snorkel packages available, number of days determines price.

Caribbean Watersports at Sheraton Key Largo Beach Resort

Sheraton Key Largo Beach Resort, MM 97, Overseas Hwy. 1, Key Largo, FL, (800) 223-6728, (305) 852-4707, fax (305) 852-5162, e-mail: cwsports@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park, Molasses Reef, Christ of the Abyss, *Benwood*, *Duane* and *Bibb* wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Completely renovated 200-room resort, parasailing, wave runners, enviro-tours, PADI certification. **Best buy** ▶ \$240 per night. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sheraton Key Largo Beach Resort.

Dixie Divers of Key Largo

103400 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) FLA-DIVE, (305) 453-9588, fax (305) 453-0635, e-mail: dixiediv@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.padi.com/dixiedivers.htm **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park and surrounding areas, Molasses Reef, Christ of the Abyss and various wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wide variety of departure areas, PADI 5-Star Instructor Development Center. **Best**

buy ▶ 5-day, 4-night packages, \$274.

HMS Minnow Charters, Inc.

PO Box 1687, Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 366-9301, (305) 451-7834, fax (305) 453-0819, e-mail: j_burcham@msn.com, internet: www.3routes.com/scuba/na/usa/fl/08/0320.html **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personalized trips, 6 divers max.

Island Ventures

104500 Overseas Hwy., Rowell's Marina, Key Largo, FL 33037, (305) 451-4957, fax (305) 451-5060.

It's A Dive Watersports

103800 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 809-9881, (305) 453-9881, fax (305) 453-0093, e-mail: itsadive@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Florida Keys NMS, Pennekamp Park, Molasses Reef north to The Elbow. **What sets them apart** ▶ Variety of diving and watersports activities, emphasis on enjoyment and relaxation. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank daily dive trip, accommodations and free casino passes, \$87.50. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Marriott's Key Largo Bay Beach Resort.

Jules' Undersea Lodge

51 Shoreland Dr., MM 103.2, Oceanside, Key Largo, FL 33037, (305) 451-2353, fax (305) 451-4789, internet: www.jul.com **Dives** ▶ The hotel is located in a natural mangrove lagoon at a depth of 30 feet. **What sets them apart** ▶ World's only underwater hotel, guests scuba dive to room and can earn aquanaut specialty, also offer underwater weddings and honeymoons. **Best buy** ▶ Luxury Aquanaut package, \$295 per person, per night, Ultimate Romantic Getaway, \$1,000 per couple, per night; group rates for 4 to 6 guests. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Jules' Undersea Lodge.

Kelly's on the Bay & Aqua Nuts Divers

104220 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 226-0415, (305) 451-1622, fax (305) 451-4623, e-mail: kellys@florida-keys.fl.us, internet: florida-keys.fl.us/kellys.htm **Dives** ▶ Florida Keys NMS, Carysfort Reef, *USCGC Duane*, Aquarius habitat. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on customer service. **Booking office** ▶ Ana Maria Avila Island Travel (305-361-9111). **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, two 5-trip dive packages, \$265.

Ocean Divers Inc.

522 Caribbean Dr., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 451-1113, (305) 451-1113, fax (305) 451-5765, e-mail: oceandivers@aol.com, internet: oceandivers.com **Dives** ▶ Key Largo NMS and Pennekamp Park, *USCGCs Bibb* and *Duane*, Molasses Reef, *Spiegel Grove*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, dive shop adjacent to hotel, new dive programs, including unlimited diving, Wreck Trek, Scuba Safari. **Best buy** ▶ Weekdays (Sept.-Dec.): 4 nights, 3 days diving, \$326.80 per person, dbl. occ.; same package w/ unlimited diving, \$445.10. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Marina del Mar.

Quintessence Diving Services Inc.

Box 1570, MM 103.5, Bayside, Key Largo, FL 33037, (305) 451-2400, fax (305) 451-6440 **Dives** ▶ Key Largo NMS, Pennekamp Park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service diving facility, 6-passenger charter operation, all levels of scuba instruction taught on an individual basis. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

Sea Dwellers Dive Center

99850 Overseas Hwy., MM 100, Key Largo, FL, (800) 451-3640, (305) 451-3641, fax (305) 451-1935 **Dives** ▶ Key Largo, Florida Keys NMS. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom dive boat, caters to small groups. **Best buy** ▶ 2 location dives w/ tanks, \$57.50.

Sharky's Dive Center

106240 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 935-

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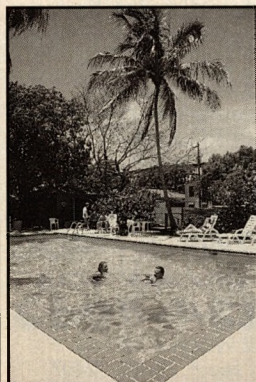


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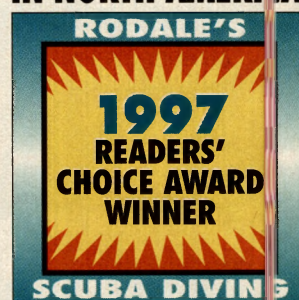


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E-mail: tavdiver@tavernierdivecenter.com



FLORIDA

DIVE, (305) 453-3711, fax (305) 453-9670, e-mail: mrkeylargo@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Key Largo NMS, Key Largo to Islamorada. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers separate high-speed catamaran dive boats for all activities. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages available w/ Holiday Inn, Marriott, Ramada Limited and others. Call for details.

Silent World Dive Center

103200 US 1, Key Largo, FL 33037, (800) 966-3483, (305) 451-3252, fax (305) 451-3252, internet: www.pennekamp.com/sv/ **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park and Key Largo NMS. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers less crowded boats and professional diving services. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 5 2-tank boat trips, tanks and weights, accommodations, \$260 per person, dbl. occ.

Stephen Frink Photographic Inc.

Box 2720, MM 102.5, Key Largo, FL 33037, (305) 451-3737, fax (305) 451-5147, e-mail: phototours@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Key Largo NMS, wrecks, international photo tours. **What sets them apart** ▶ Underwater photo specialty, E-6 processing, camera and video rentals, Cibachrome custom enlargements. **Booking office** ▶ WaterHouse Photo Tours (800-272-9122 or 305-451-2228).

KEY WEST

A Key West Reef Trip

6810 Front St., Safe Harbor Marina, Key West, FL 33040, (305) 292-1345, e-mail: afunsail@conch.net, internet: www.keywest.com/sailkw.html **Dives** ▶ Coral reefs off Key West. **What sets them apart** ▶ 65-foot scuba and snorkel sailing schooner.

Bonsai Diving

1075 Duval St., C-9, Key West, FL 33040, (305) 294-2921, fax (305) 294-2921, e-mail: bonsaidvg@aol.com, internet: www.keywestparadise.com/bonsai.html **Dives** ▶ Key

West wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 passengers maximum, personal service, guided tours, Nikonos V and RS and Hi8 video rentals. **Best buy** ▶ \$65 per person (off season), \$105 per person (high season).

Captain's Corner

0 Duval St. & 511 Greene St., Key West, FL 33040, (305) 296-8865, fax (305) 292-7685, e-mail: rcamusjr@ix.net.com, internet: keywestparadise.com/ccdive.html **Dives** ▶ Shallow and deep reefs and wrecks in the Keys and Gulf of Mexico. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-Star instruction facility, multilingual staff, PADI specialties, two dive boats. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 10 dives, \$527; 4 days, 3 nights, 4 dives, \$349. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Ocean-Key House.

Dive Key West Inc.

3128 N. Roosevelt Blvd., Key West, FL 33040, (800) 426-0707, (305) 296-3823, fax (305) 296-0609, e-mail: divekeywest@flakeysol.com, internet: www.divekeywest.com **Dives** ▶ Shallow and deep dives at 100-plus reef locations and numerous wrecks near Key West. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wide variety of equipment, rentals and repairs, certified pure air, charters, all levels of dive training, 25 years experience. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary, custom packages available.

Key West Diver

MM 45, U.S. 1, Key West, FL 33040, (800) 87-DIVER, (305) 294-7177, fax (305) 294-7612, e-mail: 76265.65@compuserve.com **Dives** ▶ Various wrecks, including *Cayman Salvor*, *Joe's Tug* and *All Alone*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive computers on all wreck dives, 12 divers max., emphasis on safety. **Booking office** ▶ Key West Travel (800-334-4041 or 305-294-7878). **Best buy** ▶ 3-day diving package, 6 dives, 2 nights lodging, \$239.

Seaclype Divers

Oceanside Marina, 5950 Peninsula Ave., Key West, FL

READER RATINGS/FLORIDA KEYS

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
BEGINNER DIVING											86.7
PHOTOGRAPHY											80.5
SNORKELING											80.3
VALUE											79.4
FISH LIFE											78.1
ADVANCED DIVING											76.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											70.5
QUALITY OF WRECKS											68.9

33040, (800) 626-6396, (305) 296-1975, fax (305) 296-9516, e-mail: 102261.2262@compuserve.com, internet: www.keywestparadise.com/seaclype.html **Dives** ▶ Specialize in out-of-the-way sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, free hotel pick-up, custom hotel packages, divemaster in water on every dive. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 2 days diving, transfers, snacks and drinks on board, \$210 per person, dbl. occ.

Southpoint Divers

714 Duval St., Key West, FL 33040, (800) 891-DIVE, (305) 292-9778, fax (305) 296-6888, e-mail: southpoint@aol.com **Dives** ▶ *Joe's Tug*, *Cayman Salvor*, Western Dry Rocks, Ball and Chain, Eye of the Needle, and various wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Fast, comfortable boats, dive and earn frequent flyer miles with American Airlines, 5-Star PADI IDC training center. **Booking offices** ▶ PADI Travel Network, Scuba One Tours (800-352-8081). **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 2 days diving, tanks and weights, accommodations, \$147 per person, dbl. occ. (summer). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hyatt Key West Resort.

LITTLE TORCH KEY

Fun Yet Charters

28448 Yucatan Lane, Little Torch Key, FL 33042, (800) 413-2048, (305) 872-3407 **Dives** ▶ Looe Key NMS, areas outside park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Customized trips, spearfish-

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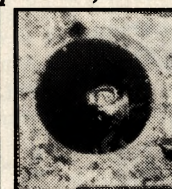
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ing, hook and line fishing, lobstering and shelling, caters to small groups. **Best buy** ▶ Charter rate for 6 divers, \$250.

Seahorse Scuba

New Found Harbor Marina, MM 28.5, Little Torch Key, FL, (305) 745-2315, fax (305) 745-2697 **Dives** ▶ Looe Key NMS, Lower Keys reefs and wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Daily 2- or 3-tank trips, manage own dive profile, 6 divers max., underwater camera rentals. **Best buy** ▶ \$90 per day includes 2-tank dive, tanks and weights.

MARATHON

Abyss Dive Center

Holiday Inn, 13175 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050, (800) 457-0134, (305) 743-2126, fax (305) 743-7081 **Dives** ▶ More than 50 sites, including Sombrero Reef, Coffins Patch, *Thunderbolt* wreck. **What sets them apart** ▶ 34-foot dive boat, 6 divers max., freshwater shower on board. **Best buy** ▶ \$68 per person, per night includes room at Holiday Inn, breakfast and dive trip. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Holiday Inn & Marina.

Capt. Hook's Marina & Dive Center

11833 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL, (800) CPT-HOOK, (305) 743-2444, fax (305) 289-1374 **Dives** ▶ *Thunderbolt* wreck, the Gap, 38 patch reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star center, nitrox certifications and fills, dockside air station, medically trained captains and instructors. **Best buy** ▶ 1-night stay, 2-tank dive, \$59 per person, dbl. occ.

CJ's Dive Center

2250 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050, (800) 210-9433, (305) 289-9433, fax (305) 287-9853 **Dives** ▶ Sombrero Reef, Delta Shoals, Boom Ledge. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, group rates, custom dive boat.

Fantasea Divers

4650 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL, (800) 223-4563, (305) 743-5422, fax (305) 743-4739, e-mail: divers@divethelkeys.com, internet: www.divethelkeys.com **Dives** ▶ Sombrero Lighthouse, Coffin's Patch, Delta Shoal, *Thunderbolt* wreck, Banny's Ledge, Donut, Rainbow, The Crescent, The Dome, Jewfish Rocks, Herman's Hole. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on safety and customer satisfaction. **Best buy** ▶ \$59.95 per person, dbl. occ., per day, includes accommodations, tanks and weights.

Hall's Diving Center & Career Institute

1994 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050, (800) 331-4255, (305) 743-5929, fax (305) 743-8168 **Dives** ▶ Sombrero Reef, Delta Shoals, Looe Key, *Thunderbolt* wreck, *Barge* wreck, Shark Ledge, the Drop-off. **What sets them apart** ▶ 40 miles of reef, located on resort property, nitrox fills and certification, instruction open-water through instructor, rebreather training and rentals. **Best buy** ▶ \$67 per person includes accommodations and diving; 3-, 5- and 7-night packages also available. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Faro Blanco Resort & Marina.

Marathon Divers

12221 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050, (800) 724-5798, (305) 289-1141 **Dives** ▶ Various Atlantic sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Sales, service, rentals, daily reef trips. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, \$30.

The Diving Site

12399 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050, (800) 634-3935, (305) 289-1021 **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to groups, 20 years experience. **Best buy** ▶ Packages including diving and accommodations at Howard Johnson's, starting at \$40.50 per person.

RAMROD KEY

Looe Key Dive Center

MM 27, U.S. 1, Ramrod Key, FL, (800) 942-5397, (305) 872-

2215, fax (305) 872-3786, e-mail: looekeydiv@aol.com **Dives** ▶ Looe Key NMS. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive shop, motel, pool, tiki bar and restaurant, boat ramp. **Booking office** ▶ Vacation Rentals (800-874-1894). **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, tanks and weights, accommodations, tax, rates start at \$79.24 per person, dbl. occ., per day.

SUMMERLAND KEY

Outcast Charters & Florida Keys House

Box 41, Summerland Key, FL 33042, (305) 872-4680, fax (305) 872-4536, e-mail: outcast97@aol.com, internet: www.outcast.com **Dives** ▶ Looe Key NMS. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dockside lodging at Florida Keys House B&B, personal, private dive and snorkel trips. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 2 nights, accommodations, 2 "private" boat dives on Looe Key Reef with 1 night dive, tanks and weights, \$283 per person (quad. occ.), \$338 per person (dbl. occ.), June 15- Dec. 15.

SUNSHINE KEY

Paradise Divers Inc.

MM 39, US 1, Sunshine Key Resort & Marina, (305) 872-1114, fax (305) 872-5430 **Dives** ▶ Lower Keys, from Marathon to Key West, including Looe Key NMS, Lower Keys wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers deep air through tech deep air, nitrox, wreck training, scooter diving, PADI & IANTD facility, personal service, cater to small groups, equipment sales and rental. **Best buy** ▶ Training packages from \$99.95. Call for course list. Dive packages from \$69.95, including tanks and weights.

TAVERNIER

Conch Republic Divers

90311 Overseas Hwy., Tavernier, FL 33070, (800) 274-DIVE, (305) 852-1655, fax (305) 853-0031, e-mail: ckdantom@fla.net, internet: conchrepublicdivers.com **Dives** ▶ Southern edge of Pennekamp Park to Alligator Reef, including reef, wreck and drift dives. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small shop, big boat, 20 years of local experience, wide variety of dive sites. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights in efficiency cottages on Florida Bay, three 2-tank dives, tanks and weights included, \$220 per person, plus tax.

Florida Keys Dive Center

PO Box 391, MM 90.5, Tavernier, FL 33070, (800) 433-8946, (305) 852-4599, fax (305) 852-1293, e-mail: scuba@floridakeysdivectr.com, internet: www.floridakeysdivectr.com **Dives** ▶ Pennekamp Park, Conch Wall, Conch Reef, Davis Reef, Crocker Reef and Pickles Reef, *USCGC Duane*, *Eagle* wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Family-oriented, PADI 5-Star IDC facility. **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 5 nights, 8 boat dives, breakfast and accommodations at Ocean Pointe Suites, \$420 per person, dbl. occ.

Floridaze Dive Center

MM 90.8, Plantation Key, Box 1221, Tavernier, FL 33070, (800) 437-DIVE, (305) 852-1432, fax (305) 852-1776, internet: www.floridaze.com **Dives** ▶ Shallow reefs, *Eagle* and *Duane* wrecks, Conch Wall and the Aquarius. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 divers max., PADI training facility, drift and night diving, seasonal lobster dives. **Best buy** ▶ Day dives to 2 locations or night dive to 1 location, efficiency accommodations, \$72.50.

Tavernier Dive Center

MM 90.7, Box 465, Tavernier, FL 33070, (800) 787-9797, (305) 852-4007, fax (305) 852-0869, e-mail: tavdive@tavernierdivercenter.com, internet: www.tavernierdivercenter.com **Dives** ▶ Various sites, including Pennekamp Park, *USCGC Duane* and *Eagle* wrecks, Conch and Crocker ledges, Pickles and Davis reefs, from Key Largo to Islamorada. **What sets them apart** ▶ Rated Number 1 dive operator in North America, according to *RSD's* 1997 Readers' Choice awards. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages w/ accommodations vary by season, starting from \$67.50.



Florida Springs & Coasts

From the diamond-clear fresh water of the state's inland springs to the wreck-filled waters of the Panhandle and the Gold Coast, divers find plenty to call their own north of the Keys.

Weather

Mild year-round in the south, more temperate north of Cape Canaveral.

Average Water Temp

Upper 70Fs in summer; winter temps vary by location from lower 70Fs in South Florida to mid-50Fs in the north. Water in the springs remains a constant 72F year-round.

Visibility

Springs can be 150-feet-plus; ocean waters vary by season and location, ranging from 30 feet on a blustery winter day to 100-plus in mid-summer.

Diving

Constant temperatures and invisible water draw divers to inland springs like Ginie, Vortex, Devil's Den, Blue Grotto, Morrison and Cypress. Manatees and divers converge on Crystal River for winter meetings every year. Baitfish and barracudas hang out on the wreck of the 198-foot freighter *Mercedes* off Broward County.

DIVE OPERATORS

FLORIDA SPRINGS

American Pro Diving Center

821 S.E. Hwy. 19, Crystal River, FL 34429, (800) 291-DIVE, (352) 563-0041, fax (352) 563-5230, internet: gmient.com/ampro **Dives** ▶ Freshwater springs of north-central Florida. **What sets them apart** ▶ Guided tours, full-service dive center, manatee snorkel and dive tours November through April. **Best buy** ▶ One-and-a-half-day diving/snorkel packages from \$77.50.

Blue Grotto Dive Resort

3852 N.W. 172nd Ct., Williston, FL 32696, (352) 528-5770, fax (352) 528-5770 **Dives** ▶ Blue Grotto Springs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 200-foot visibility, 72F water temps, 100-foot depth, on-site rentals and air. **Best buy** ▶ \$24 per diver, per day.

Branford Dive Center

US 27 & Suwanee River, Branford, FL 32008, (904) 935-1141, fax (904) 935-3252 **Dives** ▶ North Florida springs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Central location for access to area springs. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages from \$29.50.

Devil's Den

FLORIDA

RR#3, Box 23DD, Williston, FL 32696, (352) 528-3344, fax (352) 528-2400 **Dives** ▶ Devil's Den. **What sets them apart** ▶ Cabins, RV park, campgrounds, heated pool, horseback riding available, 2.5-acre manmade spring to open in Sept. **Best buy** ▶ \$24.61 admission for divers, \$4 for nondivers; gear rental and air fills separate.

Ginnie Springs Resort

7300 N.E. Ginnie Springs Resort, High Springs, FL 32643, (800) 874-8571, (904) 454-2202, fax (904) 454-3201, e-mail: ginnie@gnv.fdt.net internet: www.ginniesprings.com **Dives** ▶ Ginnie Springs, Devils Eye Springs, Santa Fe River. **What sets them apart** ▶ 72F water year-round, no wind or waves, 300-foot visibility. **Booking office** ▶ Planet Travel (904-472-6644). **Best buy** ▶ 2 days diving, 2 nights of camping, 6 air fills, and a half-day canoe rental, \$69.95. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Ginnie Springs Resort.

Hal Watts' Forty Fathom Grotto

9487 N.W. 115th Ave., Ocala, FL 34482-1007, (352) 368-7974, fax (352) 351-1924, e-mail: bobbydiver@aol.com, internet: www.travel-base.com/activities/scuba **Dives** ▶ Hal Watts' Forty Fathom Grotto. **What sets them apart** ▶ Diving in unique underwater environment filled with fossils, shells and various wrecks.

Paradise Springs

4040 S.E. 84th Lane Rd., Ocala, FL 34480, (352) 368-5746 **Dives** ▶ Paradise Springs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 200-foot visibility, 74F water temp., 100-foot depth, on-site rentals, air fills, nitrox, manatee snorkel tours, river tours. **Best buy** ▶ Spring admission, \$24 per person, per day.

Plantation Inn & Golf Resort

9301 W. Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, FL 34429, (800) 632-6262, (352) 795-4211, fax (352) 795-1368 **Dives** ▶ Crystal River. **What sets them apart** ▶ Complete equipment rental, instruction and guide services.

Steamboat Dive Inn

Corner US Hwy. 27 & 129, Box 1000, Branford, FL 32008, (904) 935-2283, fax (904) 935-1471, e-mail: steamboat@isgroup.net **Dives** ▶ Peacock Springs, Ginnie Springs, Troy Spring and Little River Spring. **What sets them apart** ▶ On-site motel, boat charters, cavern, cave, nitrox and mixed gas instruction. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 2 dives (Troy Spring), lodging, \$199.95.

Vortex Spring

Rte. 2, Box 650, Hwy. 81 N., Ponce de Leon, FL 32455, (800) 342-9792, (904) 836-4979, fax (904) 836-4962 **Dives** ▶ Vortex Spring. **What sets them apart** ▶ Campground, rental gear. **Best buy** ▶ \$20 per diver, per day.

SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

Adventure Scuba

150 N. US Hwy. 1, Jupiter-Tequesta, FL 33469, (800) 221-5420, (407) 746-1555, fax (407) 746-1555 **Dives** ▶ More than 25 locations, including Jupiter Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service dive shop, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive, tanks, 1 night accommodation, \$75-\$85.

Anchor Scuba

505 W. Broward Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312, (800) 374-9792, (305) 763-3483, fax (305) 763-2391 **Dives** ▶ Boca Raton, Pompano Beach, Fort Lauderdale. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dive guides at no extra cost, technical diving lessons, dive sites 20 minutes from dock.

The Aqua Shop

505 Northlake Blvd., N. Palm Beach, FL 33408, (800) 331-3772, (561) 848-9042, fax (561) 848-9232 **Dives** ▶ Various sites in the Palm Beach area. **What sets them apart** ▶ 35 years of experience, cater to new divers. **Best buy** ▶ 2 nights at the Radisson Resort, 2 days diving, tanks and

weights, tax, \$159 per person, dbl. occ.

Biscayne National Underwater Park

Box 1270, Homestead, FL 33030, (305) 230-1100, fax (305) 230-1120 **Dives** ▶ Biscayne National Park. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only commercial dive operation permitted to dive the national park, which encompasses more than 181,000 acres. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days diving, 4 nights lodging, tanks and weights, \$294.95 per person, dbl. occ.; 2 days diving, 1 night lodging, tanks and weights, \$99.95 per person, dbl. occ.

Coral Island Charters

Riviera Beach Marina, Palm Beach, FL, (888) TUX-DIVE, (561) 745-9286, fax (561) 745-8820, e-mail: 102640.514@compuserve.com **Dives** ▶ Palm Beach wrecks and reefs, including *Princess Anne*, *Mizpah*, Breakers Reef and shark dive. **What sets them apart** ▶ Thorough dive briefings, dry towels, fruit platters, snacks onboard, gear loading and assembly, all levels of instruction. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 3 days diving, weekend breakfasts, tanks and weights, \$229 quad occ.

Coral Reef Scuba

4984 N. University Dr., Lauderhill, FL 33351, (954) 748-5105, fax (954) 748-6208 **Dives** ▶ Broward County. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service retail, on-site repair, SSI and PADI certification, 3 locations.

Divers Paradise of Key Biscayne

4000 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne, FL, (305) 361-3483, fax (305) 361-7971 **Dives** ▶ More than 30 wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ 40- and 30-foot dive boats, 5 minutes from wrecks, 10 minutes from downtown Miami, 15 minutes from airport.

Divers Unlimited

6023 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, FL 33024, (888) 232-7234, (954) 981-0156, fax (954) 963-5255, e-mail: dvr.sunlmt@bellsouth.net **Dives** ▶ Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Nitrox fills and rentals. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive trip, \$35.

Diving Locker

223 Sunny Isles Blvd., N. Miami Beach, FL 33160, (305) 947-6025, fax (305) 947-2236 **Dives** ▶ Tenneco Towers, C-1 tanks, *Patricia*, south Broward and Dade county wrecks and reefs, boat 5 minutes from store. **What sets them apart** ▶ Trips daily on 6-passenger boats, 5 minutes from inlet, small parties and guides, store 2 blocks from ocean, motels walking distance. **Best buy** ▶ Room, 2-tank dive trip, full rental, round-trip transportation, \$109 per day.

Dixie Divers of Deerfield Beach

1645 S.E. 3rd Ct., Deerfield Beach, FL 33441, (800) 456-2088, (954) 420-0009, fax (954) 420-0380, e-mail: dixiediv@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.padi.com/dixiedivers.htm **Dives** ▶ Deerfield Beach, Fort Lauderdale. **What sets them apart** ▶ Professional diving services. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 6 boat dives, \$269.

Endless Summer Charters

427 Crescent Circle, Lake Park, FL 33403, (800) 2-GO-DOWN, (561) 881-1595, fax (561) 848-9232 **Dives** ▶ Palm Beach County, Marathon. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 locations, personal service, commitment to fun and safe diving. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages tailored for individuals or groups.

Fathoms O' Fun

2629 N. Riverside Dr., Pompano Beach, FL 33062, (800) 226-7303, (954) 942-7333, fax (954) 785-9102, e-mail: fathomsfun@aol.com, internet: www.fathomsfun.ycg.com **Dives** ▶ From Boca Raton to Fort Lauderdale. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shark dives, quick ride to dive sites, large, comfortable vessel, snacks and drinks onboard, emphasis on safety, Coast Guard certified. **Best buy** ▶ Call for rates.

Florida Divers

15000 Collins Ave., N. Miami Beach, FL 33161, (305) 756-7346, e-mail: divebo@ix.netcom.com, internet: home.navi.soft.com/divebo **Dives** ▶ Tenneco oil rigs, the *Tortuga*, Wreck Trek (5 wrecks in one dive), The Wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 divers max., fast boat, sites within 30-minute boat rides.

Lighthouse Dive Center

2507 N. Ocean Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 35062, (954) 782-1100, fax (954) 782-0297, e-mail: xprqia@prodigy.com, internet: www.members.aol.com/fathomsfun **Dives** ▶ From Boca Inlet to Port Everglades, including reefs and wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ 5-star PADI training facility, custom dives, nitrox fills, shark dives, technical and instructor dives, video facilities, personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dives daily, hotel, equipment and unlimited shore diving, \$79.

Pro Dive International

801 Seabreeze Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316, (800) 772-3483, (954) 761-3413, fax (954) 761-8915 **Dives** ▶ Fort Lauderdale and Broward County. **What sets them apart** ▶ 60-foot glass-bottom boat, 2 warm-water showers, snack bar and bathroom facilities. **Best buy** ▶ 2 nights (minimum), tanks and weights, dive, from \$70 per person, dbl. occ.

The Scuba Club, Inc.

4708 Poinsettia Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33407, (800) 835-2466, (561) 844-2466, fax (561) 844-8256, e-mail: scuba.club@aol.com **Dives** ▶ West Palm Beach area and Jupiter Beach. **What sets them apart** ▶ On-premises dive boat, 2 swimming pools, photo darkroom, gear storage and drift dives, steam room, nitrox, rebreather rentals. **Best buy** ▶ 1 dive, \$23; accommodations, \$75.

Seafari Dive & Surf

75 E. Indiantown Rd., #603, Jupiter, FL 33477, (561) 747-6115 **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service travel agent on staff.

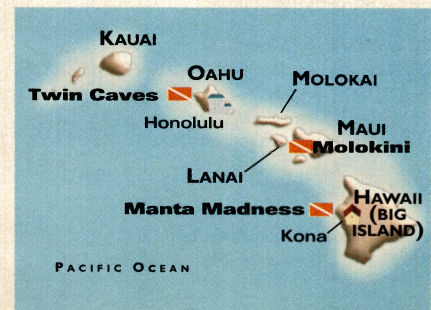
Sun Star Aquatics

3100 S. Dixie Hwy. #75, Boca Raton, FL 33432, (561) 368-9952, fax (561) 392-4116, e-mail: diveboca@aol.com, internet: members.aol.com/diveboca **Dives** ▶ Delray to Pompano Beach. **What sets them apart** ▶ Reef dives, fast boats, small groups, wreck dives from 20 to 200 feet, nitrox fills, personal service, tech and recreational diving.

Hawaii

According to RSD's 1997 Readers' Choice Awards, Hawaii's four major diving islands—Kauai, Hawaii, Maui and Oahu—are among the top 10 destinations in the Indo-Pacific region. And seven of the 10 best dive operators in the Indo-Pacific region are also located in Hawaii.

Surprised? You shouldn't be. The volcanic forces that shaped the Hawaiian islands have molded a dramatic subsea landscape of lava tubes, caves and pinnacles.



READER RATINGS/HAWAII

HAWAII

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
SNORKELING											85.0
PHOTOGRAPHY											83.2
ADVANCED DIVING											82.9
BEGINNER DIVING											81.3
FISH LIFE											78.7
VALUE											78.5
SHORE DIVING											74.5
HEALTH OF REEFS											69.9
BIG ANIMALS											65.9

Thirty percent of the marine species in these waters are found nowhere else in the world.

Weather

Warm, with cooling trade winds. Temperatures vary little year-round, averaging 68F to 83F, with September tending to be the warmest month. Rainy season runs from November to March.

Average Water Temp

Expect mid- to high 70Fs in winter and spring, low 80Fs in summer and fall.

Visibility

Varies island to island but tends to be excellent, often above 100 feet.

Diving

With a marine preserve on one side and a dramatic drop-off on the other, the crescent-shaped ride of Molokini Crater is just one of the many volcanic sites to enjoy in the Hawaiian islands. Oahu's Twin Caves, where two vertical caves drop like mine shafts through a gut-wrenching wall, is another. Kona's biggest claim to fame is Manta Madness, an after-hours romp with manta rays attracted to the shallows by the lights of a beachfront hotel.

DIVE OPERATORS

HAWAII (BIG ISLAND)

Big Island Divers

75.5467 Kawai St., Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 488-6068, (808) 329-6068, fax (808) 326-5654, internet: www.ilhawaii.com/pt/bidivers.html **Dives** ▶ More than 30 sites off the Kona Coast, including lava tubes, arches and pinnacles. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, 6 passengers max., full-service retail and rentals, custom dive trips, private charters available.

Captain Cook Divers

Box 3060, Kailua-Kona, HI 95745, (800) 525-PADI, (808) 328-5662 **Dives** ▶ Honaunau Bay's Place of Refuge, Carousel, Golden Arches, South Point, Milolli, Kealakekua Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dolphin encounters. **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights, 6 days rental car, 3 2-tank dives, \$399. **Resort affiliation** ▶ King Kamehameha Hotel.

Dive Makai Charters

Box 2955, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745, (808) 329-2025, fax (808) 329-2025, internet: www.comptime.com/divemakai **Dives** ▶ Big Island Kona Coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ "Read the Reef" program focuses on underwater animals and their environment. **Booking office** ▶ Ali'i World Travel (800-646-7304).

East Hawaii Divers

13-1002 Kahukai St., Pahoa, HI 96778, (808) 965-7840, fax (808) 965-7840 **Dives** ▶ Various sites around the Big Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shore diving, private tours, flexible schedules, one-on-one attention.

Eco-Adventures

Kona Inn Shopping Village, 75-5744 Alii Dr., Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 949-3483, (808) 329-7116, fax (808) 329-7091, e-mail: ecodive@ilhawaii.net, internet: www.travelbase.com/activities/scuba/eco-adventures/ **Dives** ▶ 66 sites, including ones with turtles, mantas and dolphins. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, marine life briefings, gear handling, blue water and long-range charters, only PADI 5-star IDC facility and ANDI nitrox facility on Hawaii. **Booking offices** ▶ PADI Travel Network, U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights, 6 days rental car, daily buffet breakfasts, 3 days of 2-tank diving, incl. tanks, air, lunch, guide, all taxes, \$575 per person, dbl. occ. (direct bookings only).

Hawaiian Divers

75-5660 Palani Rd., Suite P1, King Kamehameha Hotel, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 525-PADI, (808) 329-5662, fax (808) 329-2323, e-mail: hawdiver@ilhawaii.net, internet: hawaiian-divers.com. **Dives** ▶ Thunder Reef, Bandit Ledge, Long Lava Tube, Hammerhead Point, Place of Refuge and various wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shark cage diving, drift diving, diving bell, tech diving, nitrox, tri-mix, rebreathers, aluminum 80s, Genesis 120s, caters to small groups. **Best buy** ▶ May and June special, 2-tank charters, \$49.95; 6 nights, 6 days rental car, 3 2-tank dive charters, \$399.

Jack's Diving Locker

75-5819 Alii Dr., Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 345-4807, (808) 329-7585, fax (808) 329-7585, e-mail: divejdl@gte.net, internet: home1.gte.net/divejdl/htm. **Dives** ▶ More than 80 sites on the Kona coast, manta night dives, caverns and lava tubes. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on safety, 80% repeat business, guided dives, personal attention, whale and dolphin watching. **Booking office** ▶ Travel Unlimited (800-881-3077, 808-329-0521). **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, includes car rental, accommodations at Royal Kona Resort, 6 dives, tanks and weights, lunch, taxes, \$940 for two.

King Kamehameha Divers

75-5660 Palani Rd., Suite P-1, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 525-PADI, (808) 329-5662 **Dives** ▶ Golden Arches, Sharon's Place, Blue Water, Turtle Pinnacles, Turtle Heavens, Phosphorescent Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Marine biologist on staff, uncrowded boat charters, manta ray night dives, wreck diving. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 2-tank dives, 1 manta ray night dive, \$492 per person, dbl. occ.

Kohala Divers Ltd.

PO Box 44940, Kawaihae Shopping Center, Kawaihae, HI 96743, (808) 882-7774, fax (808) 882-4095, e-mail: theboss@kohaladivers.com, internet: www.kohaladivers.com. **Dives** ▶ Kohala Coast, Big Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personalized dive tours, packages.

Kona Coast Divers

75-5614 Palani Rd., Kailua-Kona, HI 96740, (800) 562-3483, (808) 329-8802, fax (808) 329-5741, e-mail: divekona@kona.net, internet: www.konacoastdivers.com. **Dives** ▶ More than 40 sites off Big Island's Kona coast, including lava tubes, coral reefs, arches and pillows. **What sets them apart** ▶ One location, 2 custom-built dive boats, oil-less compressors, repair, rentals and retail, air-conditioned classroom with on-site pool. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 2 days, 2-tank boat dive, \$252 (dbl. occ.); \$331 (sgl. occ.).

Red Sail Sports Hawaii

Hilton Waikoloa Village, 69-425 Waikoloa Beach Dr., Kamuela, HI 96743, (800) 255-6425, (808) 885-2876, fax (808) 885-4169 **Dives** ▶ Kohala Coast on the Big Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wide variety of watersports and diving services. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days of 2-tank diving, sunset cruise, T-shirt, \$273 per person.

Sandwich Isle Divers

Kailua-Kona, HI, (888) 743-3483, (808) 329-9188, fax (808)

326-5652, e-mail: sandive@aloha.net, internet: www.aloha.net/~sandive. **Dives** ▶ Hawaii's Kona coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 divers max., personal service, repairs, rental, retail, diving instruction. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank, dives to 2 locations, equipment, \$80.

KAUAI

Bubbles Below Scuba Charters

6251 Hauaala Rd., Kapaa, HI 96746, (808) 822-DIVE, fax (808) 742-2258, e-mail: kaimanu@aloha.net, internet: www.aloha.net/~kaimanu/. **Dives** ▶ All sides of Kauai, Niihau and Lehua Rock. **What sets them apart** ▶ Marine biology tours to selected sites, multilevel profiles, nitrox fills, twilight/night dives. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank boat dive, \$100; 7th charter is free. 3-tank Niihau, Lehua Rock trips, \$235.

Sunrise and Nitrox Divers of Kauai

Box 1255, Kapaa, Kauai, HI 96746-7255, (800) 695-DIVE, (808) 822-REEF, fax (808) 823-0647 e-mail: doctrox@aloha.com, internet: www.aloha.com/~doc trox. **Dives** ▶ Kauai's north, east and south shores, Niihau, scooter dives to Ammo Drop. **What sets them apart** ▶ DPVs (Diver Propulsion Vehicles), enriched air and cavern diving specialties, 24-hour air, nitrox and oxygen fills, kayak rentals. **Best buy** ▶ Certification course, T-shirt, all gear, lunch, 2-tank boat dive or 1-tank DPV dive, \$298. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Islander on the Beach Hotel.

MAUI

Aquatic Charters of Maui, Inc.

132 Kupuna St., Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (808) 879-0976, fax (808) 874-9041 **Dives** ▶ Molokini Island Marine Reserve, La Perouse Bay and Maui's south shore. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers 6-passenger dive boats, private boat charters and personalized service.

Capt. Nemo's Scuba Shack

150 Dickenson St., Lahaina, HI 96761, (800) 367-8088, (808) 661-5555, fax (808) 661-6688 e-mail: garland@maui.net, internet: www.scubashack.com. **Dives** ▶ Maui, Lanai, Molokini. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star facility, rental and repair, beach and night diving, nitrox and rebreather training facility.

Dive Maui/Offshore Adventures

900 Front St., Lahaina, Maui, HI 96761, (808) 667-2080, (808) 661-4363, e-mail: offshore@maui.net, internet: www.maui.net/~offshore/index. **Dives** ▶ Maui, Lanai, Molokini. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, flexible scheduling and tour times. **Best buy** ▶ 3-day boat trips, \$267.

Dive & Sea Maui

1975 S. Kihei Rd., Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (808) 874-1952, fax (808) 874-8690, e-mail: lynda@maui.net. **Dives** ▶ South Maui, Molokini, other reef, drift and animal encounter dives. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small operation, 6 divers max., rentals, air, PADI certifications, emphasis on customer service. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 6 dives, \$270; 2 days, 4 dives, \$185; 1 day, 2 dives, \$99; gear included w/packages.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures

Box 616, Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (800) 635-1273, (808) 879-3584, fax (808) 874-1939, e-mail: robinson@maui.net, internet: www.maui.net/~robinson/erda.html. **Dives** ▶ More than 20 sites, including Molokini Crater, the south coast of Maui and Lanai Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers personalized attention and an experienced staff, custom charters, small groups, and marine biology briefings before and after dives.

Lahaina Divers Inc.

143 Dickerson St., Lahaina, Maui, HI 96761, (800) 998-3483, (808) 667-7496, fax (Continued on page 142)

Jamaica

Better known as the home of reggae and Red Stripe, Jamaica doesn't get full credit for its diving. Surrounding the island is a shallow plateau of corals, and running along the north shore is a 145-mile wall that drops into the Cayman Trench.

Weather

Winter daytime temperatures range between 76F and 86F, but soar into the 90Fs in summer. Expect brief showers during the early fall and spring.

Average Water Temp/Vis

Mid-70Fs in winter and mid-80Fs in summer. Vis averages 60 to 100 feet but can reach 150 feet in summer.

Diving

Off Ocho Rios, Devil's Reef is a steep coral pinnacle rising from 200 feet, sprouting dreadlocks of black coral and colorful sponges. The Arena off Montego Bay features twin tunnels and the remains of a Spanish shipwreck encrusted into the coral wall. Negril's Throne Room is a cavernous underwater room filled with some of Jamaica's trademark sponge life, including a royal seat of orange elephant sponge and a crown of antler sponge.

DIVE OPERATORS

Jamaqua Divers

Box 65, Runaway Bay, Jamaica, (800) 822-3274, (809) 973-4845, fax (809) 973-4875, e-mail: jamaqua@infochan.com, internet: infochan.com/jamaqua. **Dives** ▶ Runaway Bay and Montego Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star diving facility, 4 locations, multilingual instruction, caters to small groups. **Booking office** ▶ Experience the Adventure (ETA). **Best buy** ▶ 6 days/5 nights, 3 days of 2-tank boat dives daily, all-inclusive, \$580. **Resort affiliations** ▶ Club Ambiance, Club Caribbean, Roundhill Hotel, Tryall Motel.

Negril Scuba Centre

P.O. Box 49, Negril, Jamaica, (800) 818-2963, (809) 957-4425, fax (809) 957-4425, e-mail: negrilresortassociation.negril@nilenet.com, internet: www.jamaica-irie.com/negrilscubacenter. **Dives** ▶ Long Bay in Negril Harbor. **What sets them apart** ▶ Multilingual staff, individual attention to each diver. **Booking offices** ▶ Experience the Adventure (ETA), Jamaican Travel Specialist (800-544-5979). **Best buy** ▶ 7-night, 7-dive package, \$450.

Reef Divers Ltd.

P.O. Box 137, Runaway Bay, St. Ann, Jamaica, (800) 735-4610, (809) 973-4400, fax (809) 973-4400. **Dives** ▶ Runaway Bay, Spanish Anchor, Tunnel Reef, Joe's Reef, The Canyon, various wrecks and walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers personalized diving services, small groups, specialty dives and eco-diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Carousel Tours (800-735-4610), Karp Travel (800-864-2999). **Best buy** ▶ Accommodations, 3 buffet meals, some drinks, 1 dive daily, unlimited snorkeling, sailing and glass-bottom boat rides, transfers, equipment, \$95 per person, per day (additional dives \$20). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sunflower Villa Resort.



Sea and Dive Jamaica

74 Main St., Ocho Rios, St. Ann, Jamaica, (809) 974-5762, fax (809) 974-5762, e-mail: jamlaw@infochan.com. **Dives** ▶ Between Mammee Bay and Rio Nuevo. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, private half-day charters (1-4 divers only). **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 dives, accommodations, 2 meals a day, \$649.

Sea-Riv Divers

Alligator Pond, Jamaica, (800) 772-0727, (770) 952-7711, fax (770) 965-8140. **Dives** ▶ Southern coast of Jamaica, including ocean, rivers and springs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only dive operation in area, a "get-away-from-it-all" resort. **Booking office** ▶ World Travel (800-772-0727). **Best buy** ▶ Packages start at \$140/day, all-inclusive; call for other packages. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sea-Riv Resort.

Mexico

The numbers don't lie. According to our 1997 Readers' Choice survey, more divers go to Cozumel than any other dive destination. And for good reasons. Conveniently close to major U.S. airports, Mexico's largest island offers world-

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class drift diving at bargain prices. But soaring on liquid winds past the towering reefs of Palancar and Punta Sur is only the tip of the sombrero. Across the channel, the Yucatan Peninsula resort towns of Cancun, Isla Mujeres, Playa Del Carmen and Puerto Aventuras have their own fishy twist on diving *Caribe Mexicana*. They also have *cenotes*, diveable sinkholes in the jungle floor that access ethereally clear freshwater springs and caves.



On the Pacific Coast, the rocky underwater terrain of pinnacles and seamounts attracts a variety of big marine life from tuna to manta rays, gray whales and hammerhead sharks. Divers hungry for these encounters head to the small fishing towns lining the Sea of Cortez and Baja Peninsula or the resort-oriented towns of La Paz and Cabo San Lucas. Adventurous

divers will also find a warm welcome and year-round diving in the southern resort towns of Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, Mazanillo, Ixtapa and Huatulco, which many tout as "the new Cancun."

Weather

The Yucatan averages 200 days of sunshine a year with temperatures ranging from 75F in winter to 85F in summer. The Pacific coast has hot, balmy summers with highs in the 90Fs and winter where temperatures range from 60Fs at night to 80Fs during the day.

Average Water Temp/Vis

Mid-80Fs in summer and mid-70Fs in winter for the Yucatan; mid-80Fs in summer and mid-60Fs in winter on the Pacific Coast. Yucatan visibility averages 150 feet or more year-round, while the Pacific coast vis fluctuates from 70 feet in winter to 90 feet in summer.

Diving

From fast currents at Cedar Pass to shallow night dives on Paradise Reef, diving the healthy reefs of Cozumel is as easy as an afternoon siesta. Cancun and Isla Mujeres aren't famous for diving, but low-profile reefs like Horseshoe are packed "to the gills" with enormous schools of grunts and snapper. Surrounded by jungles, Akumal's cenotes like

Temple of Doom and El Grand Cenote are glimpses into Mayan temples of water and limestone. El Bajo Seamount in the Sea of Cortez is a congregation of ocean pinnacles that attracts schooling hammerheads.

READER RATINGS/COZUMEL

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
VALUE											90.4
ADVANCED DIVING											90.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											87.2
QUALITY OF WALLS											84.8
FISH LIFE											84.0
HEALTH OF REEFS											81.8
SNORKELING											81.4
BEGINNER DIVING											78.6
SHORE DIVING											67.2

DIVE OPERATORS

BAJA CALIFORNIA

Amigos del Mar de los Cabos

PO Box 43-Blvd., Marina S/N, Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico 23410, (800) 344-3349, (310) 454-1686, fax (310) 454-1686, e-mail: caboresort@aol.com, internet: www.amigosdelmar.com. **Dives** ▶ Sea of Cortez, including Cabo San Lucas, Cabo Pulmo and Gordo Banks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Specialized advanced dives for qualified divers, specialty trips, personal service. **Booking office** ▶ Cabo Resort Reservations (800-344-3349). **Best buy** ▶ Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Solmar Suites.

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Allegro Resorts and Dive Palancar offer the best diving variety in the Caribbean. In COZUMEL, Dive Palancar operates out of Allegro's Diamond Resort – and provides a PADI 5 Star operation located an average of 8 minutes from the island's best reefs. Five daily departure times are offered, including an 8:30 advanced dive and twice weekly night dives.

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MEXICO

Andromeda Divers

Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico, (011) 52-114-32765 **Dives** ► In and around the Bay, Gordo Banks, Cabo Pulmo. **What sets them apart** ► Certifications, specialty dives, gear rental, watersports, ecological guided tours, custom tours for small groups. **Best buy** ► 2-tank dive, tanks and weights, \$60.

Baja Expeditions

Sonora #586, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico CP23060, (800) 843-6967, (619) 581-3311, fax (619) 581-6542, e-mail: 72234.1520@compuserve.com, internet: www.cibnor.conacyt.mx/bajaex/baja.html. **Dives** ► Sea of Cortez, La Paz, Baja California. **What sets them apart** ► Experienced crews, 3 dives per day. **Best buy** ► 3 nights, 2 days diving, 6 tanks, transfers, breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks onboard, \$325.

Cabo Acuadeportes

Box 136, Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico 23410, (011) 52-114-30117, fax (011) 52-114-30117, e-mail: cabo@sierra-computers.co, internet: www.sierra-computers.com/~cabo **Dives** ► Cabo San Lucas Bay, Sand Falls, sea lion colony, seamounts, and various grottoes, wrecks and reefs, Cabo Pulmo, Gordo Banks, Chileno Bay. **What sets them apart** ► Offers all levels of PADI, NAUI and SSI instruction, 2 locations, freshwater showers, shore diving, English-speaking dive guides, 6 boats, caters to small groups. **Booking office** ► Dive Tours. **Resort affiliation** ► Hotel Cabo San Lucas, Hotel Hacienda.

Land's End Divers

Local A-5, Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico, (800) 576-3483, (011) 52-114-32200, fax (011) 52-114-32200 **Dives** ► Sea of Cortez, Cabo San Lucas Bay, Sand Fall, Sea Lion Colony, Chileno Reef, Santa Maria Reef, Gordo Banks, Cabo Pulmo and many other sites. **What sets them apart** ►

Personal service, small groups (6 divers max.). **Booking office** ► Rohnert Park Dive Center (707-584-2323). **Best buy** ► 4 nights, three 2-tank dives, \$350 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ► Hotel Plaza Las Glorias.

CANCUN

Club Med/Cancun

Cancun, Mexico, (800) CLUB-MED, (011) 52-988-52290 internet: www.clubmed.com. **Dives** ► Punta Nizuc, Cozumel. **What sets them apart** ► 2-day resort classes, excursions to freshwater cenotes. **Best buy** ► 6 dives and equipment, \$65. **Resort affiliation** ► Club Med Cancun.

Manta Divers Cancun

Blvd. Kukulkan Km. 6.5, Playa Tortugas L3A, Cancun, Q. Roo, Mexico 77500, (011) 52-988-34050, fax (011) 52-988-76206 **Dives** ► Isla Mujeres reefs, Punta Cancun, Cenote Cavern. **What sets them apart** ► Caters to advanced and beginners, guided dive tours to Cozumel and cenotes, PADI courses, wreck diving in spring and summer. **Booking office** ► Best Day (800-543-7556). **Best buy** ► 7 days, 6 nights, 5 days diving, 1 night dive, \$515.

COZUMEL

Aqua Safari

Box 41, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico, (011) 52-987-20101, fax (011) 52-987-20661, e-mail: dive@aquasafari.com, internet: www.aquasafari.com. **Dives** ► Cozumel National Park. **What sets them apart** ► Clean, comfortable dive boats, multilingual divemasters, fully equipped, 30 years experience. **Booking offices** ► Dive Tours, Island Dreams, Poseidon Venture Tours. **Best buy** ► Dive packages vary.

AquaWorld Cozumel

Carretera Costera Sur, Playa Paraiso, Km. 3.7, Cozumel,

Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (888) 266-9888, (011) 52-987-21210, fax (011) 52-987-21210, e-mail: aqwssc@cozumel.czm.com.mx. **Dives** ► All southwest reefs of Cozumel, caverns. **What sets them apart** ► Environmental education program, new equipment, fleet of fast boats, bilingual staff. **Booking offices** ► Adventure Tours, Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Dive Tours, Grand Club, Island Dreams. **Best buy** ► 2 days of 2-tank boat dives, 1 shore and 1 night dive, \$118; 3 days of 2-tank boat dives, 1 shore and 1 night dive, \$155; 5 days of 2-tank boat dives, 5 shore and 1 night dive, \$247.50. **Resort affiliation** ► Crown Princess Sol Caribe Resort.

Blue Bubble Divers

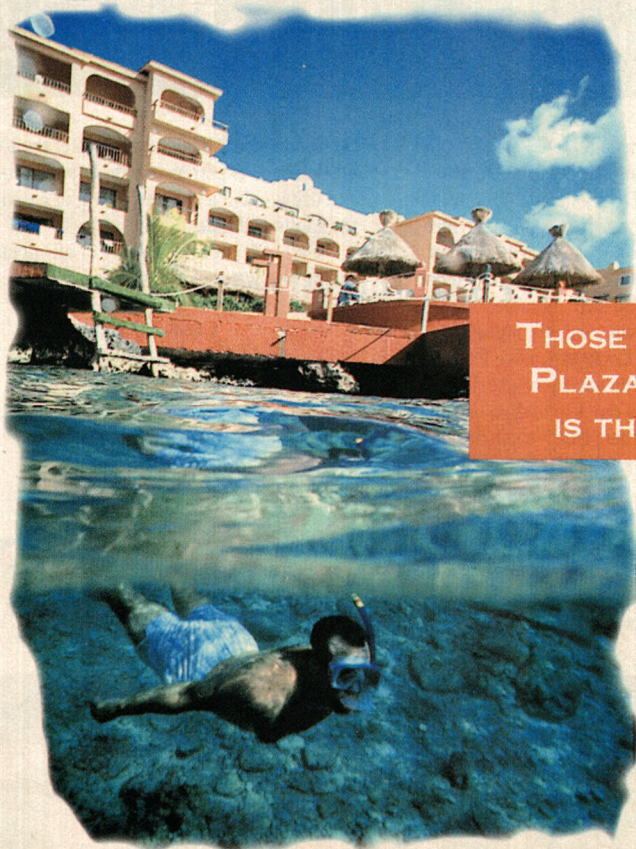
5th Ave. South, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico, (011) 52-987-21865, fax (011) 52-987-21865, e-mail: bubbles@cozumel.finned.com.mx, internet: www.gssolutions.com/bluebubble. **Dives** ► Palancar, Colombia, Punta Sur, Maracaibo, El Islote. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, fast dive boats. **Booking office** ► Travel Depot, (800) 878-8853. **Best buy** ► 3 nights, 2-day dive package, \$150.

Caribbean Divers International

Box 191, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (800) 874-7312, (011) 52-987-21080, fax (011) 52-987-21426, e-mail: caridive@cozumel.czm.com.mx. **Dives** ► Colombia, Palancar, Santa Rosa, San Francisco, Yucab, Tormentos, Cedral Pass, Paradise, Chankanaab, Punta Sur, Barracuda and Maracaibo reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Bilingual staff, NAUI, PADI and PDIC instruction, emphasis on safety, service and teamwork. **Booking office** ► Pied Piper Travel (800-874-7312). **Best buy** ► Hotel and 2-tank diving, \$59 to \$69 per day, choice of 6 hotels.

Del Mar Aquatics Dive Shop

Box #129, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico, (800) 877-4383, (011) 52-987-21944, fax (011) 52-987-21855 **Dives** ► Maracaibo,



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MEXICO

Punta Sur, Palancar, Santa Rosa Wall, Tormentos, Paso del Cedral and Las Palmas. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, unlimited shore diving. **Booking office** ► Sombrero Tours (800-877-4383). **Best buy** ► Several packages available. Call for rates.

DIMI Educational Dive Center

Av. Rafael Melgar #45-B, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico, (011) 52-987-22915, fax (011) 52-987-23964, e-mail: dimidive@cozumel.czm.com.mx. **Dives** ► All reefs in Cozumel. **What sets them apart** ► Owner-operated, multilevel dives, 8 divers max., cave and cavern diving, nitrox. **Best buy** ► 4 nights, 3 days diving, breakfast and lunch on diving days, \$163 per person, dbl. occ.

Dive House Cozumel

Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (011) 52-987-21953, fax (011) 52-987-23068, e-mail: dive@diverhouse.com. **Dives** ► All Cozumel reefs. **What sets them apart** ► Customized diving services, divers grouped according to experience level. **Booking offices** ► Dive Tours, Island Dreams, PADI Travel Network, Tropical Tours. **Resort affiliation** ► Fiesta Americana Cozumel Reef Hotel.

Dive Palancar/Diamond Resort Cozumel

Carretera Chankanaab, Km. 16.5, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (011) 52-987-23443, ext. 895 **Dives** ► Palancar, Colombia, Punta Sur, Santa Rosa, El Cedral, Maracaibo, cenotes. **What sets them apart** ► Full service and instruction in diving, snorkeling, sailing, fishing and windsurfing, 4 scheduled single-tank dive trips daily, average boat ride 10 minutes, daily advanced dive trip, night diving, nitrox. **Booking offices** ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Dive Tours, Sand Dollar Tours, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 12 tanks, all food, beverages, entertainment, 2 free tanks, 1 free night, \$888/diver, \$636/nondriver (until June 30; Aug. 24-Oct. 23). **Resort affiliation** ► Diamond Resort Cozumel.

Dive Paradise

601 Melgar, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (800) 308-5125, (011) 52-987-21007, fax (011) 52-987-21061, e-mail: appledp@cozumel.czm.com.mx, internet: www.dparadise.com. **Dives** ► Variety of dive sites, emphasis on safety, caters to small groups, large fleet, nitrox, computer-friendly. **Booking offices** ► Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Landfall Productions, Ocean Connection, Rothschild Dive Safaris, Sportours, Tropical Adventures Travel, Tropical Tours. **Best buy** ► 7 nights, 5 days of 2-tank boat dives, 4 1-tank boat dives, \$415 per person, dbl. occ.; 4 nights, 3 days of 2-tank boat dives, 2 1-tank boat dives, \$249 per person, dbl. occ. (some restrictions).

Diving Adventures

Calle 5 #2, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico, (888) 338-0388, (011) 52-987-23009, fax (011) 52-987-23009 e-mail: diventur@cozumel.czm.com.mx. **Dives** ► From Barracuda to Maracaibo, including Palancar,

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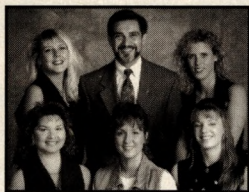
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MEXICO

Santa Rosa and various shallows. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service with a no-rush atmosphere. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days accommodations, 2 days diving, \$250.

Marine Sports

Ave. Rafael E. Melgar, Costera Sur, Km. 1.7, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (800) FIESTA-1, (011) 52-987-22899, fax (011) 52-987-22154 **Dives** ▶ Santa Rosa, Palancar, Colombia, various other sites. **Booking office** ▶ Island Dreams. **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 3 nights, 2 days of 2-tank dives, buffet breakfasts, taxes, \$247. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Fiesta Inn Cozumel.

Papa Hogs Scuba Emporium

Box 562, San Miguel, Cozumel, Mexico 77600, (800) 780-3949, (011) 52-987-21651, fax (011) 52-987-24465, e-mail: diving@papahogs.com, internet: www.papahogs.com. **Dives** ▶ Southern sites, Barracuda, San Juan in the north. **What sets them apart** ▶ Canadian-owned and operated, offers 12-hour round-the-island trip, computer diving.

Scuba Cozumel

PO Box 289, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (800) 847-5708 internet: www.galapago.com. **Dives** ▶ Cozumel's underwater park. **What sets them apart** ▶ 20 years continuous operation, dedicated dive resort, emphasis on quality of boats and staff. **Booking office** ▶ Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, meals, 5 days of 2-tank boat diving, unlimited beach diving, gear lockers. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Scuba Club.

Scuba-Du

PO Box 137, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (800) 327-0200, (011) 52-987-20322, fax (011) 52-987-24130 e-mail: scubadu@cozumel.cz.com.mx, internet: www.cozumel.net/diving/scubadu/ **Dives** ▶ Palancar Reef, Santa Rosa Wall and La Francesca, Punta Sur, Paso del Cedral, Tormentos, Colombia Reef, Yucab. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal attention, small groups and fast, custom-built boats, computer-friendly, nitrox. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Tours, Island Dreams, PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ \$208 per person, per night, includes breakfast buffet, 2-tank dive, and accommodations, extra person \$105 (diver) or \$51 (nondiver). **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Presidente Intercontinental.

Studio Blue Cozumel Dive Center

A. Rosado Salas, No. 121, PO Box 473, Cozumel, Q. Roo, Mexico 77600, (011) 52-987-24414, fax (011) 52-987-24330 e-mail: studioblue@cozumel.finned.com.mx. **Dives** ▶ Palancar, Santa Rosa, Punta Sur, Barracuda and Colombia Reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups of 2 to 6 divers, emphasis on customer satisfaction. **Booking offices** ▶ Affordable Tours & Trips (817-222-2900), Blue Water Scuba Nashville (615-356-9340). **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 3 days, 2-tank dives, \$230-\$250 per person, dbl. occ.

JALISCO

Club Med/Playa Blanca

Jalisco, Mexico, (800) CLUB-MED, (011) 52-335-10004 internet: www.clubmed.com. **Dives** ▶ Various sites along Playa Blanca. **What sets them apart** ▶ Included in price are 2-day resort and PADI and NAUI open-water classes. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Club Med Playa Blanca.

SONORA BAY

Club Med/Sonora Bay

Guaymas, Mexico, (800) CLUB-MED, (011) 52-622-60070 internet: www.clubmed.com. **Dives** ▶ Seal Island, wrecks. **What set them apart** ▶ 2-day resort classes, open-water and advanced instruction classes, encounters with seals and sea lions. **Best buy** ▶ 13 dives and equipment, \$125. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Club Med Sonora Bay.

PUERTO VALLARTA

Pacific Scuba

Juarez 722 Centro, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico 48300, (011) 52-322-24741, fax (011) 52-322-24741 **Dives** ▶ Marietas Islands, El Morro, Chimo, Majahuita, Los Arcos. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups, soft weights, emphasis on safety. **Best buy** ▶ Call for current rates.

YUCATAN

Akumal Dive Center

AP 714, Cancun, Q. Roo, Mexico 77500, (800) 351-1622, (011) 52-987-59025, fax (915) 581-6709, e-mail: clubakumal@aol.com. **Dives** ▶ Cenote, jungle, cave, cavern and open-water diving. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small groups, underwater cavern tours, personal service, Scubapro and Sherwood dealer/repair center. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 3 nights, 4-tank dives, 1 night dive, 3 shore dives, \$255.36-\$278.88 per person, dbl. occ.

Aquatech Villas DeRosa

Lot 35, Aventuras Akumal, Q. Roo, Mexico 77780, (011) 52-987-59020, fax (011) 52-987-59020, e-mail: 105107.2445@compuserve.com. **Dives** ▶ Akumal, Cozumel, Yucatan caves, caverns and cenotes. **What sets them apart** ▶ Technical training facility, nitrox, rebreathers, cave and cavern diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Divers Supply (352-332-4141), Mad Dog Expeditions, Scuba Systems (847-674-0275), Underwater Phantaseas (303-220-8282). **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 6 days diving, group transfers, meals, 10 open-water dives, 2 cavern dives, 1 night dive, \$850 per person, minimum 4.

Mike Madden's CEDAM Dive Centers

Box 1, Puerto Aventuras, Q. Roo, Mexico 77750, (011) 52-987-35147, fax (011) 52-987-35129 e-mail: mmadden@cancun.rce.com.mx, internet: www.cedamdive.com. **Dives** ▶ Yucatan coast, freshwater caverns, Cozumel walls. **What sets them apart** ▶ 9 boats for coastal diving, 50-foot boat for diving Cozumel, air-conditioned transportation to cavern diving, dive and snorkel trips to Nohoch, world's longest underwater cave. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Tours, Focus on Travel (305-557-8007), Ocean Connection, PADI Travel Network, Scuba Ventures. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 2 open-water dives, 1 day diving in Cozumel, 1 day diving caverns, 1 night dive, all-inclusive accommodations, \$708.

Studio Blue Playa del Carmen

Hotel Molcas Local #5, Playa del Carmen, Solidaridad, Q. Roo, Mexico 77710, (011) 52-987-31088, fax (011) 52-987-24330, e-mail: studioblue@cozumel.finned.com.mx. **Dives** ▶ Playa del Carmen coast, Cozumel reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Cenote diving, cave and cavern dives. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

Tank-Ha Dive Center

5 Ave. Norte, Calles 8 & 10, Box 70, Playa del Carmen, Q. Roo, Mexico 77710, (011) 52-987-30302, fax (011) 52-987-31355, e-mail: tankha@cyberstores.com, internet: www.cyberstores.com/resorts/attractions/tankha. **Dives** ▶ Playa del Carmen's continental coast and Cozumel reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Crossroads Travel (203-434-8243), Pacific Coast Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights accommodations, 5 days of 2-tank diving, transfers, \$350, dbl. occ.

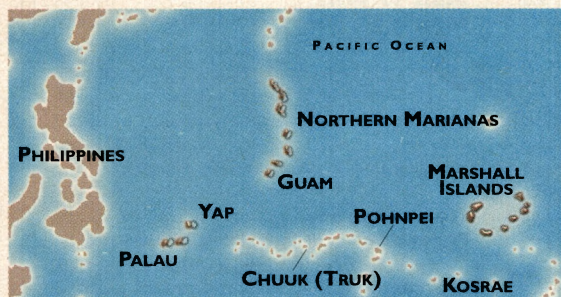
ZIHUATANEJO

Zihuatanejo Scuba Centers

Calle Cuauhtemoc #3, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero, Mexico, (011) 52-755-42147, fax (011) 52-753-42147, e-mail: dive.mexico@mail.com, internet: www.divemexico.com. **Dives** ▶ Pacific coast of Mexico, including seamounts and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service diving instruction, NAUI Pro facility. **Booking office** ▶ Dive Discovery (415-258-9110). **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights at Hotel Paraiso, 5 days of 2-tank dives, \$415 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Paraiso.

Pacific (Micronesia)

Clumped together, the Micronesian landmasses—Palau, Yap, Truk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and the Marshall Islands—would be no bigger than Rhode Island, yet they're peppered over a tract of wild blue as vast as the lower 48 states. No wonder the sea controls the hearts and minds of residents and visitors alike here



in diving's far eastern hall of fame.

Weather

The climate is defined by heavy rains, which as a rule decrease when you travel westward from Kosrae to Palau. Proximi-

ty to the equator ensures steady temps year-round, in the 80Fs and 90Fs during the day, and 70Fs at night.

Average Water Temp

Hovers at about 80F year-round.

Visibility

Expect visibility from 75 to 150 feet, depending on the season; it peaks in January through April, the driest months.

Getting There

Continental Micronesia is your only choice. All flights depart from Honolulu, and you can either catch the nonstop to Guam or the island-hopper by way of Johnston Atoll, Kwajalein and Majuro in the Marshall Islands, to Kosrae. If you have the time, take the long way.

Diving

From Palau's drift dive fish-captures at Blue Corner to Yap's manta dances at Miil Channel, from Truk's coral-choked wrecks like the *San Francisco Maru* to the Marshalls' nuked ghost fleet of

Bikini, from Pohnpei's remote Ant Atoll to Kosrae's hard coral gardens at Hiroshi Point, Micronesia is well worth the double digit-hour plane ride it takes to get there.

DIVE OPERATORS

CHUUK (TRUK)

Blue Lagoon Dive Shop

PO Box 429, Truk, FSM 96942, (011) 691-330-2796, fax (011) 691-330-4307 **Dives** ▶ Truk Lagoon and various wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced dive staff. **Booking office** ▶ Truk Travel Unlimited (011-691-330-2798). **Best buy** ▶ Daily rate, \$70 per person, 2 tanks, guide.

Sundance Tours & Dive Shop

PO Box 85, Moen, Truk, (011) 691-330-4234, fax (011) 691-320-4451 **Dives** ▶ Reefs and wrecks of Truk Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ Pro 42 jet boat.

GUAM

AAA White Dragon Divers

790 Marina Dr. #644, Tumon, Guam 96911, (011) 671-646-3483, fax (011) 671-646-3467 e-mail: dragon@ittech.net. **Dives** ▶ Guam, Yap, Truk and Palau. **What sets them apart** ▶ Nitrox, tri-mix, underwater weddings and multilingual diving instruction.

Guam Tropical Dive Station

PO Box 1649, Agana, Guam 96910, (011) 671-477-2774, fax (011) 671-477-2775 **Dives** ▶ Sites throughout Guam including Blue Hole, Double Reef and Cocos Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star facility, retail, repair and rental, offers instruction, shore diving. **Booking office** ▶ First Class Travel (011-671-472-4337). **Best buy** ▶ 1 day of boat diving, including transfers, tanks, lunch, 2 dives, \$95.

Micronesian Divers Association, Inc.

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Visit our web page at: WWW.CEDAMDIVE.COM



PACIFIC (MICRONESIA)

856 N. Marine Dr., Piti, Guam 96925, (011) 671-472-6321, fax (011) 671-477-6329, e-mail: mda@mdaguam.com, internet: www.mdaguam.com. **Dives** ▶ Guam, Indonesia, Kosrae, Palau, Pohnpei, Rota, Saipan, Tinian, Truk, Yap. **What sets them apart** ▶ 27 instructors, including 2 PADI course directors on staff, 3 boats that handle 25 2-tank divers, self-service rental. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary depending on site. Hotel and diving packages from \$99 to \$150 per day.

Paradise Diving Center

238 E. Marine Dr., Agana, Guam 96910, (011) 671-477-1600 **Dives** ▶ Guam, Palau and Pohnpei. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers technical diving instruction, nitrox equipment and penetration wreck diving.

KOSRAE

Dive Caroline

P.O. Box 6, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia 96944, (011) 691-370-3239, fax (011) 691-370-2109 **Dives** ▶ Sandy Beach Point, Shark Island and various walls and wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced staff. **Booking office** ▶ See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 4 days of diving w/lunch, \$550. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Sandy Beach Hotel.

Phoenix Marine Sports Club

P.O. Box 1013, Tofol, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia 96944, (011) 691-370-3100, fax (011) 691-370-3509 **Dives** ▶ Various local walls, drop-offs, wrecks and holes. **What sets them apart** ▶ Individual attention, custom dive packages.

Sleeping Lady Divers

Kosrae Village Resort, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia 96944, (011) 691-370-DIVE, fax (011) 691-370-5839, e-mail: kosraevillage@mail.fm, internet: www.kosraevillage.com. **Dives** ▶ Fringing coral reef off Kosrae.

What sets them apart ▶ Offers small, custom trips, instruction and handicap-accessible services. **Booking offices** ▶ Blue Water Travel (800-481-3483), Cen Pac, Island Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 10-day, 9-night super-saver, \$577.50 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Kosrae Village Resort.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Marshalls Dive Adventures

P.O. Box 1, Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960, (011) 692-625-3119, fax (011) 692-625-3505, e-mail: rreadmin@ntamar.com. **Dives** ▶ Dives reefs, pinnacles, wrecks, walls and animal encounter dives of Majuro, Arno and Mili Atolls, wreck diving at Bikini Atoll. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups. **Booking office** ▶ Cen Pac, Mad Dog Expeditions. **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive on Majuro, \$90.

NORTHERN MARIANAS

All American Divers

Saipan, Northern Marianas, (011) 670-233-7056, fax (011) 670-233-7055, internet: www.allamericandivers.saipan.com. **Dives** ▶ Shore dives off Saipan, including Lau Lau, Ovyon Grotto, Wing Beach, boat dives at Ice Cream Cone, Dimples. **What sets them apart** ▶ Complete schedules, multilingual staff.

Blue Sea Sports

P.O. Box 3734, C.K., Saipan, Northern Marianas 96950, (011) 670-234-7903, fax (011) 670-234-9497 **Dives** ▶ Saipan, Tinian.

Dive Rota

Box 941, Rota, Northern Marianas 96951, (011) 670-532-3377, fax (011) 670-532-3022 **Dives** ▶ Pearlman Tunnel, Harnom Drop-off, wreck of the *Shoun Maru*, Senhanom Cave, Pona Point. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small

groups, 6 divers max. **Booking offices** ▶ Pac Tours (800-245-4129), Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji.

Stingray Divers

PPP373, Box 10000, Saipan, Northern Marianas 96950, (011) 670-233-6100, fax (011) 670-234-3709 e-mail: rick.northern@saipan.com **Dives** ▶ Various sites off Saipan and Tinian. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, all divemasters and instructors speak English, NAUI dive shop. **Booking offices** ▶ Continental Micronesia, Micronesia Divers Association, Inc. (011-671-477-7253), Pactours. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 4 days diving, \$440. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Pacific Islands Club.

PALAU

Fish 'N' Fins

P.O. Box 142, Koror, Palau 96940, (011) 680-488-2637, fax (011) 680-488-1070 **Dives** ▶ Rock Islands, WWII wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ All local employees. **Booking offices** ▶ Poseidon Venture Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Accommodations, tax, transfers, 2 dives daily, lunch, \$139 per person, dbl. occ., \$165 per person, sgl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Marina Hotel.

Neco Marine

P.O. Box 129, Koror, Palau 96940, (011) 680-488-1755, fax (011) 680-488-3014 **Dives** ▶ Blue Corner, Big Drop-off. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to big and small groups.

Palau Diving Center

Box 5, Koror, Palau 96940, (011) 680-488-2978, fax (011) 680-488-3155 e-mail: carpcorp@belau.com. **Dives** ▶ Blue Corner, Big Drop-off, German Channel and other spots in Koror and Ulong. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced crew, emphasis on safety. **Booking offices** ▶ Continental Micronesia, Rothschild Dive Safaris. **Best buy** ▶ Dive

Dive into The NORTHERN MARIANAS

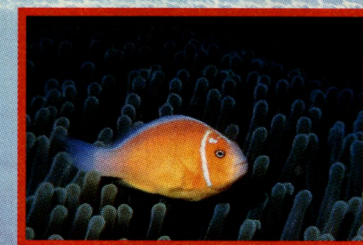
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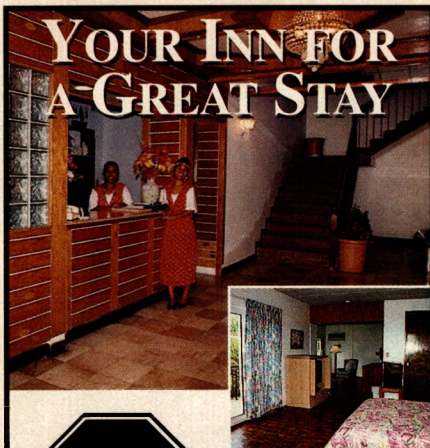
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Discover a tropical Eden in the Western Caroline Islands, Yap Island. We're perhaps best known for our Stone Money, carved from distant islands and transported in sailing canoes on epic voyages over open ocean. With over 90 miles of virgin barrier reef and our incredible marine panoramas it's no wonder we're called "World Class Diving's Best Kept Secret." In Mi'l Channel, plankton, tide and current set the stage for a daily undersea ballet featuring Giant Manta Rays, some of the Ocean's largest creatures. A single manta encounter is a tremendous experience but on Yap our mantas stream in and out in formations, often more than a dozen at a time! And there's more...Our outer drop-offs offer crystal clear visibility in excess of 100 ft. Colorful vertical walls, coral caverns,

morays, giant turtles, armadas of lionfish and so much more entice divers who choose to experience the underwater paradise that is Yap. Treat yourself to 5 days of diving with Yap Divers and 5 nights of relaxation with Manta Ray Bay Hotel, and together we'll explore the Manta's secret world. Call me today and ask about our 5 day/5 night dive package and I'll tell you about our special little island and how to get here... or we can simply talk diving! The mantas and I hope to see you soon!



-BILL ACKER

**MANTA RAY BAY HOTEL
& YAP DIVERS**

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FSM 96943
Phone: 011-691-350-2300
Fax: 011-691-350-4567
011-691-350-3841
or call 800-DIVE-YAP

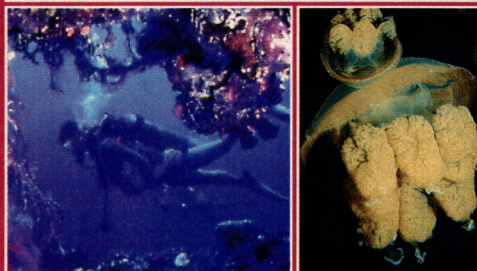
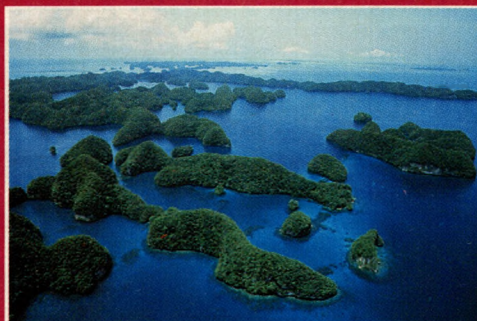
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E-MAIL: carpcorp@belau.com

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Fax: 691-330-4253 **Web:** www.inmax.com/thorfinn/ **E-mail:** Seaward@mail.fm

CIRCLE NO. 94 ON READER SERVICE CARD

PACIFIC (MICRONESIA)

packages vary depending on season. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Carp Island Resort.

Photo Palau

PO Box 308, Koror, Palau 96940, (011) 680-488-2600, ext. 463, fax (011) 680-488-4514 **Dives** ▶ Sites throughout Palau. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service Nikonos photo shop. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Palau Pacific Resort.

Sam's Dive Tours

PO Box 428 Koror, Palau 96940, (800) 794-9RNR, (011) 680-488-1062, fax (011) 680-488-5003 e-mail: samstour@belau.com, internet: www.cyberearth.net/quest/samstour.html. **Dives** ▶ The greater Palau area. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, 8 divers max. per boat. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Continental Micronesia, Dive Discovery, Manta Reisen (011-41-1-268-2424), Reef & Rainforest, Sportravel Hong Kong (011-852-2854-2722), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days diving, lunch, transfers, \$695 per person, dbl. occ.

Splash

PO Box 308, Koror, Palau 96940, (011) 680-488-2600, fax (011) 680-488-2600 **Dives** ▶ Various walls, Blue Corner, wrecks and manta ray dives. **What sets them apart** ▶ High-speed covered dive boats with heads, freshwater showers and camera rinse tanks, 1 dive guide for every 6 divers. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Pan Pacific Hotels & Resorts (800-327-8585). **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank dive w/lunch, \$115 per person; gardenview room, \$103 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Palau Pacific Resort.

POHNPEI

Phoenix Marine Sports Club

PO Box 387, Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia 96941, (011) 691-320-5678, fax (011) 691-320-2364 **Dives** ▶ Various local walls, drop-offs, holes, manta ray and shark points. **What sets them apart** ▶ Individual attention, custom dive packages, large boats with twin engines.

The Village

Box 339 Pohnpei, FSM 96941, (011) 691-320-2797, (011) 691-320-3797 **Dives** ▶ Ant Atoll, Pohnpei fringing reef, Nan Madol (ruins). **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers scuba trips and tours. **Resort affiliation** ▶ The Village.

YAP

Beyond the Reef Charters

P.O. Box 609, Colonia, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia 96943, (011) 691-350-3483, fax (011) 691-350-3733, e-mail: beyondthereef@mail.fm. **Dives** ▶ Miil Channel, Valley of the Rays, Yap Caverns, Sunrise Reef, Lionfish Wall, Magic Kingdom, Gilman Wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers individual and group diving packages with a maximum of 4 divers per boat. Island-style lunches on dive days. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Continental Island Adventures, Great Destinations, Micronesian Divers Association, Pactours, Poseidon Venture Tours, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 1 night in private cottage at Pathways Hotel, 2 dives, tanks and weights, lunch, tours, \$142.25 per person, dbl. occ.

Nature's Way

PO Box 238, Colonia, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia 96943, (011) 691-350-3407, fax (011) 691-350-3407 **Dives** ▶ Sites throughout Yap. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, emphasis on marine ecology.

The Pathways Hotel

Box 718, Colonia, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia 96943, (011) 691-350-3310, fax (011) 691-350-2066 **Dives** ▶ Miil Channel, Manta Ridge, Gilman Wall, Yap Caverns, Magic Kingdom, Cabbage Patch. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small, environmentally sensitive dive tours. **Booking**

offices ▶ Adventure Express, Aggressor Fleet, Great Destinations, Island Adventures, Reef & Rainforest, Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Resort affiliation** ▶ The Pathways Hotel.

Yap Divers

PO Box MR, Yap, FSM 96943, (800) DIVE-YAP, (011) 691-350-2300, fax (011) 691-350-4567 e-mail: yapdivers@mantaray.com, internet: www.mantaray.com. **Dives** ▶ Miil Channel manta cleaning stations, walls and reefs of Yap. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service dive resort, four instructors, oxygen and radios on all boats, in-house photo center, PADI 5-Star resort center. **Booking office** ▶ Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 4 days of diving, \$672 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Manta Ray Bay Hotel.

READER RATINGS/PALAU										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING										98.6
FISH LIFE										97.8
PHOTOGRAPHY										97.2
QUALITY OF WALLS										95.0
HEALTH OF REEFS										93.8
BIG ANIMALS										93.0
VALUE										89.0
SNORKELING										69.6
QUALITY OF WRECKS										67.2
BEGINNER DIVING										51.8

Pacific (other)

The islands dotting this vast ocean—covering almost half the planet—form warm, dry places to rest and relax when you're not diving. Sounding more like the menu at an exotic restaurant, the names strike curiosity in the hearts of divers—Kiribati, Vanuatu, Rangi-roa. No less intriguing, others like Papua New Guinea and French Polynesia are a little more familiar.

Weather

Throughout the region, temperatures range from warm (65F) to hot (95F) year-round, though continual sea breezes moderate the heat on most islands. Wet and dry seasons vary throughout the region, with most of the rain and monsoons falling from October to April.

Average Water Temp

78F to 83F except where deep-water currents bring cold upwellings.

Visibility

Excellent; in the 100- to 150-foot range except where runoff from rivers empties into the ocean.

Getting There

Fiji, Tahiti, Guam, Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Tokyo, Singapore and Sydney are all hubs in the gas-guzzling routes of the Pacific Rim. Airlines jumping the big puddle include American carriers like Continental Micronesia, United

Airlines, Northwest Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines; others include Fiji's Air Pacific, Air New Zealand, Australia's Qantas Airways, Air France, Garuda Indonesia and Thai Airways to name a few.

Diving

The diving diversity and biodiversity you would expect from the world's largest ocean. As a rule, the variety and abundance of soft corals decreases as you travel eastward in the Pacific. Take your pick: Swim with gray reef sharks and dolphins on Rangi-roa in French Polynesia; eat up air on the world's largest diveable World War II wreck, the 654-foot *SS President Coolidge* in 70 to 240 feet off Vanuatu; Wade in and drop off of Sipadan Malaysia's world-famous wall.

DIVE OPERATORS

COOK ISLANDS

Aitutaki Scuba

PO Box 40, Aitutaki, Cook Islands, (888) 994-2665, (011) 682-31103, fax (011) 682-31310, e-mail: scuba@gatepoly.co.ck. **Dives** ▶ Entire outer reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only operator in area. **Booking offices** ▶ South Seas Adventures (800-576-7327), Sunspots International (800-334-5623).

Cook Island Divers

PO Box 1002, Titikaveka, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, (888) 994-2665, (011) 682-22483, fax (011) 682-22484, e-mail: gwilson@gatepoly.co.ck. **Dives** ▶ Entire outer reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service diving operation. **Booking offices** ▶ South Seas Adventures (800-576-7327), Sunspots (800-334-5623).

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Bathy's Club Moorea

BP 1247, Papetoai, Moorea, French Polynesia, (011) 689-563144, fax (011) 689-563810, e-mail: bathys@mail.pf. **Dives** ▶ More than 20 spots in the greater Moorea area. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-Star center, shark diving. **Booking office** ▶ Tahiti Vacation (800-553-3977).

Bora Diving Center

Matira Beach, Box BP 182, Bora Bora 98730, French Polynesia, (011) 689-677184, fax (011) 689-677483 **Dives** ▶ Various reef, shark, whale, turtle and drift dives. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on quality of equipment, 4 fast boats, 6 multilingual instructors, 10 different dive sites, free hotel pick-up, private lessons, night dives. **Booking offices** ▶ Club Med (800-CLUB-MED), Princess Cruises (310-553-1770). **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 2 dives/day, room, breakfast, dinner, \$1,400 for 2 people. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Hotel Bora Bora, Hotel Bora Lagoon Resort, Chez Nono.

Manihi Blue Nui

Manihi Pearl Beach Resort, Manihi Tuamotu, French Polynesia, (011) 689-964217, fax (011) 689-964272 **Dives** ▶ Reefs and lagoons, shark feeding dives, drift dives. **What**



sets them apart ▶ Encounters with mantas year-round, sites 5 minutes from dive center, small groups. **Booking offices** ▶ Islands in the Sun, Tahiti Vacations (800-553-3477). **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Manihi Pearl Beach Resort, Hotel Bora Bora Lagoon Resort, Chez Nono.

Moorea Underwater Scuba Diving Tahiti (M.U.S.T.)

BP 336, Moorea, French Polynesia, (011) 689-561732, fax (011) 689-561583 **Dives** ▶ More than 20 sites outside the reef, in the pass and inside the lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shark feeding every morning, gear rental, max. 6 divers per instructor. **Best buy** ▶ Special rates for divers at nearby hotel, 1 dive, about \$50, 5 dives, about \$225.

Raiatea/Tahaa Plongée

BP 272, Utaoia 98735, Raiatea, French Polynesia, (011) 689-663710, fax (011) 689-662625, e-mail: diveta@mail.pf. **Dives** ▶ Passes, reefs, wrecks, walls and seamounts. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shark feedings. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Islands in the Sun. **Best buy** ▶ A la carte and package rates available. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Chez Marie France.

INDONESIA

Dive Trek East

Indonesia, (800) 566-2585, (415) 731-2560, fax (415) 731-2579, e-mail: maluku@maluku.com, internet: www.maluku.com. **Dives** ▶ Land-based diving areas around Alor. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to advanced divers. **Booking office** ▶ Maluku Adventures. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days diving, airfare Kupang-Alor, all transfers, 2 nights accommodations at Kupang, meals included on dive days, \$1,350.

I. Cactus Divers

Jalan Bypass, Ngurah Rai No. 15, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, (800) JET-BALI, (510) 895-0475, fax (510) 895-0476, e-mail: pasar@aol.com, internet: www.ijnet.or.jp/INC/BALI/DIVE. **Dives** ▶ Sites around Bali. **What sets them apart** ▶ Two dive resorts, hot spa, aroma massage, star-gazing gazebo, glass-bottom boat, horseback riding, sailing, hiking. **Best buy** ▶ 5 days, 4 nights, 9 dives, 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 4 dinners, 3 transfers, call for prices. **Resort affiliations** ▶ Emerald Tulamben Beach Hotel, Hotel Tohpati Bali.

Kungkungan Bay Resort

PO Box 16, Bitung 95500, Sulawesi Utara, Indonesia, (510) 825-1939, (011) 62-438-30300, fax (011) 62-438-31400, e-mail: kbresort@mdo.mega.net.id. **Dives** ▶ Reefs, pinnacles and wrecks of Lembeh Strait, northern Sulawesi. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers instruction, rental equipment, focus on macro marine biology. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Discovery, South East Asian Divers (011-6676-340406), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 12 dives, 3 meals/day, \$1,387 per person, dbl. occ., \$1,878 sgl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Kungkungan Bay Resort.

KIRIBATI

Dive Kiribati

PO Box 959, Wexford, PA 15090, (800) 245-1950, (412) 935-1577, fax (412) 935-5388, internet: www.frontierstvl.com. **Dives** ▶ Christmas Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only operation in area. **Booking office** ▶ Frontiers International Travel. **Best buy** ▶ \$2,405 includes airfare from Honolulu, meals and accommodations, transfers, diving.

MALAYSIA

Borneo Divers and Sea Sports

Room 401-412, 4th Floor, Wisma Sabah 88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, (011) 6088-222226, fax (011) 6088-221550, e-mail: ddivers@po.jaring.my, internet: www.jar

ing.my/bdivers. **Dives** ▶ Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Sipadan Island and various wrecks off Labuan Island.

Pulau Sipadan Resort & Tours

1st Floor, #484, Block P, Bandar Sabindo, Box 61120, Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia 91021, (011) 6089-765200, fax (011) 6089-763575, e-mail: part@po.jaring.my. **Dives** ▶ Sipadan Island. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Boulder Scuba Tours (303-449-8617), Creative Adventure Club (714-663-8687), Safari Centre (213-546-4411), See & Sea Travel, Village Travel Inc. (205-870-4866). **Best buy** ▶ 6 days, 5 nights, transfers, 3 meals/day, 3 boat dives daily, \$900.

NIUE

Niue Dive

PO Box 140, Alofi, Niue Island, (011) 683-4311, fax (011) 683-4028 **Dives** ▶ Western side of the island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only operator on Niue. **Best buy** ▶ 10-dive package including 5 boat dives, \$350.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Trans Niugini Tours

Box 371, Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea, (800) 521-7242, (011) 675-542-1438, fax (011) 675-542-2470, e-mail: 100250.3337@compuserve.com, internet: www.pngtours.com. **Dives** ▶ Papua New Guinea. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, beachfront accommodations on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 6 nights, includes accommodations per person, dbl. occ., dives, meals, transfers, tanks and weight belts, \$1,158.

READER RATINGS/PAPUA NEW GUINEA											SCORE
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
ADVANCED DIVING											91.8
HEALTH OF REEFS											90.6
FISH LIFE											88.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											88.2
QUALITY OF WALLS											82.6
VALUE											77.6
BIG ANIMALS											71.8
SHORE DIVING											60.0
BEGINNER DIVING											58.8
SNORKELING											57.4
QUALITY OF WRECKS											55.6

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Adventure Sports Gizo

PO Box 21, Gizo, Solomon Islands, (800) 886-7321, (011) 677-60253, fax (011) 677-60297, e-mail: divegizo@welkam.solomon.com.sb, internet: www.divegizo.com. **Dives** ▶ Gizo and Western Province. **What sets them apart** ▶ Established in 1985, oldest owner-operated dive center in Western Province. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Dive Discovery, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, South Seas Adventures (800-576-7327). **Best buy** ▶ Lodge accommodations, 2 dives/day, \$95 per night.

Dive Solomons

PO Box 30, Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands, (011) 677-60199, fax (011) 677-60137, e-mail: gizohtl@welkam.solomon.com.sb, internet: www.islandshotels.com.au. **Dives** ▶ Iron Bottom Sound, Guadalcanal, Florida Islands, Gizo Island, Western Province. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 locations, large and experienced team of local and international divers, adventure travel, PADI certification, kayak diving, mountain biking. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Blue Water Travel (206-226-7338), Dive Discovery, Landfall Productions, PADI Travel Network,

South Seas Adventures (308-440-8675), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Accommodations, 2-tank dive, breakfast, lunch and dinner, transfers, \$143 per person. **Resort affiliation** ▶ King Solomon Hotel, Gizo Hotel.

Island Dive Services Ltd.

Box 414, Honiara, Solomon Islands, (011) 677-22103, fax (011) 677-21493, e-mail: johncarr@welkam.solomon.com.sb. **Dives** ▶ Guadalcanal Island and Florida Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Nitrox fills, SSI/IANTD training facilities, technical diving and tri-mix. **Booking office** ▶ Blue Lagoon Cruises (011-677-25300). **Best buy** ▶ Tanks and weights, transfer to site, guide services, \$39.

Solomon Sea Divers

PO Box 145, Munda, Western Province, Solomon Islands, (800) 886-7221, (011) 677-61224, fax (011) 677-61225, e-mail: dcooke@welkam.solomon.com.sb, internet: www.netilus.com/diveDiscovery. **Dives** ▶ Solomons, Coral Sea. **What sets them apart** ▶ Dan oxygen kits and VHF on all boats, shark and big fish action, cave diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Dive Discovery, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, all breakfasts and dinners, 4 days diving, transfers, \$630. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Agnes Lodge Hotel.

TONGA

Dolphin Pacific Diving

PO Box 2005, Fallbrook, CA 92088, (619) 728-4200, fax (619) 728-4220, internet: www.netilus.com. **Dives** ▶ About 50 islands in the Vava'u Group. **What sets them apart** ▶ Service, crew handles and rinses gear, cave and cavern diving, swim with humpbacks. **Booking offices** ▶ Rothschild Dive Safaris, Sportours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 2-tank boat dives, \$1,989.

VANUATU

Aquamarine Ltd.

PO Box 395, Santo, Vanuatu, (011) 678-36196, fax (011) 678-36196, e-mail: aquamarne@vanuatu.com.vu, internet: www.aquamarne-santo.com. **Dives** ▶ SS President Coolidge, shark feeding, reef and cave diving. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only operation offering shark feeding, PADI dive center. **Booking office** ▶ World Dive Adventures (800-433-3483).

Nautilus Scuba

PO Box 78, Port Vila, Vanuatu, (011) 678-22398, fax (011) 678-25255 **Dives** ▶ Port Vila, inner and outer wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Largest operator in Port Vila, equipment rental, PADI and SSI dive center.

READER RATINGS/TRUK											SCORE
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
WRECK DIVING											99.4
ADVANCED DIVING											97.2
PHOTOGRAPHY											95.2
VALUE											87.2
HEALTH OF REEFS											82.8
FISH LIFE											78.4
SNORKELING											60.6
BEGINNER DIVING											53.6
BIG ANIMALS											51.6

Puerto Rico

It's one of the most populated, most visited and most heard-of Caribbean islands, yet despite the fact that it's a U.S. commonwealth, it's as exotic as Sulawesi and Sangalakki to American

divers. More popular with the sun and sand crowd, divers are slowly wading in at resort areas like San Juan, Dorado, Fajardo and Humacao. More adventurous divers head for satellite islands of Culebra and Vieques, Mona and Desecheo.

Weather

Fairly stable all year, with an average temperature of 76F. Rainfall varies by location.

Average Water Temp

From a low of 77F in winter to a high of 84F in summer.

Visibility

Near shore, visibility averages 60 to 75 feet. Offshore, visibility improves, occasionally reaching triple digits at Desecheo and Mona.

Getting There

With more than 200 flights to and from San Juan each day on all the major U.S. carriers, getting to San Juan is as easy as getting to San Diego.

Diving

Extremely varied, from the patch reefs and coral heads that break up the sandy shallows off Fajardo, to the tunnels and trenches of Humacao and fringing reefs that ring Culebra and Vieques, from Parguera's sheer walls and coral canyons, to the biodiversity of Desecheo and more remote Mona, the "Galapagos of the Caribbean."



DIVE OPERATORS

AGUADILLA

Aquatica Underwater Adventures
PO Box 250350, Ramey, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico 00604, (800) 6-GET-WET, (787) 890-6071, fax (787) 890-6071, e-mail: aquatica@caribe.net, internet: premium.caribe.net/~aquatica/index.html. **Dives** ▶ Desecheo, west coast double walls, WWII-era B-29 bomber wreck. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 locations, emphasis on service, personal attention, oldest operation on Desecheo. **Booking office** ▶ Into the Blue (800-6-GET-WET). **Best buy** ▶ 4 days, 5 nights at Joyuda Beach Hotel, 8 dives, daily breakfast, beverages onboard, computer-assisted diving, \$385 per person, dbl. occ.

BOQUERON

Boqueron Dive Shop

Munoz Rivera #58, Boqueron, Puerto Rico 00622, (787) 851-2155, fax (787) 851-2155, e-mail: cbcscella@coqui.net, internet: home.coqui.net/cbc.sella. **Dives** ▶ Parguera Wall, Pargo Wall, pinnacles, trenches, Las Pozas, Cracks of the Wall, Black Wall, Yellow Alley. **What sets them apart** ▶ Discover Scuba Diving courses, night diving and certification, sunset snorkeling trips, wall diving. **Booking office** ▶ Harrier Tours (407-322-4981). **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights at Casablanca Hotel, 4 days of 2-tank dives, \$595.

READER RATINGS/PUERTO RICO										
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 SCORE
ADVANCED DIVING										88.6
BEGINNER DIVING										84.8
HEALTH OF REEFS										84.6
VALUE										84.4
PHOTOGRAPHY										84.2
SNORKELING										83.0
QUALITY OF WALLS										75.0
FISH LIFE										71.8
SHORE DIVING										67.6

CULEBRA

Culebra Dive Shop

Las Delicious Mall, Culebra, Puerto Rico, (787) 742-3555, fax (787) 742-0036 e-mail: genedive@worldnet.att.net, internet: home.coqui.net/jeparks/culebra/gene. **Dives** ▶ More than 50 sites all around Culebra. **What sets them apart** ▶ Certifications and specialties, caters to small groups, personal service.

DORADO

Dorado Marine Center

B-1, Suite 6, Marginal Costa de Oro, Dorado, Puerto Rico, 00646, (787) 796-4645, fax (787) 796-7323 **Dives** ▶ Culebra, Vieques, Fajardo. **What sets them apart** ▶ Shore and night diving, certifications, cater to small groups, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 4 dives, \$395-\$428.50 per diver; 5 nights, 8 dives, \$709-\$764 per diver.

FAJARDO

Palomino Island Divers Inc.

El Conquistador Resort, Fajardo, Puerto Rico, (787) 863-1000, ext. 7917, fax (787) 889-0538 **Dives** ▶ "Spanish Virgin Islands" off the northeastern coast of Puerto Rico, Culebra. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located at luxurious resort, emphasis on customer service. **Best buy** ▶ 4 days/3 nights, including accommodations and diving, \$750 to \$1,050 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ El Conquistador Resort.

Sea Ventures Pro Dive Center

Box 70002, Fajardo, Puerto Rico 00738, (800) 739-3483, (787) 863-DIVE, fax (787) 863-0199, e-mail: prscuba@aol.com, internet: www.gulf.net/about/webpresence/divepr/index.html. **Dives** ▶ Northeast coast of Puerto Rico. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-star dive center. **Best buy** ▶ 2-day discount, 15%; 3 days, 20%; 4 days, 25%; 5 days, 35%.

HUMACAO

Coral Head Divers

PO Box 10246, Humacao, Puerto Rico 00792, (800) 635-4529, (787) 850-7208, fax (787) 285-8507, e-mail: coralheaddivers@worldnet.att.net. **Dives** ▶ 25 sites along Puerto Rico's southeast coast. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2-tank dives daily, computer-assisted diving.

LAJAS

South West Scuba

Box 152, Lajas, Puerto Rico 00667, (888) NOW-DIVE, (787) 851-2885, fax (787) 851-2885 **Dives** ▶ Mona Island, Desecheo, Las Coronas and Tourmaline. **What sets them apart** ▶ Video services, shore and boat dives, sales and rental, personal service, babysitting, bilingual staff, courses and specialties.

LA PARGUERA

Paradise Scuba and Snorkeling Center

Casablanca Bldg., La Parguera, Lajas 00667, (787) 899-7611, fax (787) 899-7611, e-mail: cbcscella@coqui.net. **Dives** ▶ Parguera, Pargo Wall, pinnacles, trenches, Cayo Enrique, Black Wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ Sunset and mangrove canal snorkeling trips, resort courses, five-day certifications. **Booking office** ▶ Harrier Tours (407-322-4981). **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 nights at Hotel Casablanca, 4 days of 2-tank dives, \$595 per person.

Parguera Divers

Box 514, La Parguera, Lajas, Puerto Rico 00667, (787) 899-4171, fax (787) 899-5558 **Dives** ▶ La Parguera, including Southwest Wall, Black Wall, Fallen Rock, Hole in the Wall, the Chimney, Aquarium, Old Buoy and 20 others. **What sets them apart** ▶ 20 years experience, small groups only, personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Into the Blue, Rothschild Dive Safaris. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights at Posada Porlamar, 2 days of diving (4 dives), tanks and weights, breakfast buffet and tax, \$257.50 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Posada Porlamar.

MAYAGUEZ

The Dive Shop

100 Concordia St., Mayaguez, Puerto Rico 00680, (787) 833-6455, fax (787) 831-9060 **Dives** ▶ Desecheo, Mayaguez, Cabo Rojo, Rincon. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located close to dive sites. **Best buy** ▶ Dives start from \$50. New packages available soon.

RINCON

Desecheo Dive Shop

CA. RR 115, R. 413, Km 2.5, Rincon, Puerto Rico 00677, (787) 823-0390, fax (787) 823-0390 **Dives** ▶ Desecheo Island, Candyland, Yellow Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Closest dive shop to Desecheo, 30-minute boat ride, personalized charters, small groups. **Best buy** ▶ 3 days, 2 nights, 2 days diving, 1 free dinner, \$198 per person.

Tanks A Lot

HC01-4457, Rincon, Puerto Rico 00677, (787) 823-6301, fax (787) 823-6301.

SAN JUAN

Caribbean School of Aquatics

Taft #1, Suite 10F, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00911, (787) 728-6606, fax (787) 726-0848 **Dives** ▶ San Juan, Fajardo, "Spanish Virgin Islands." **What sets them apart** ▶ Half- and full-day sightseeing, snorkeling and sailing trips. **Best buy** ▶ Full-day scuba trip, \$124 per person, includes pick-up, gear, lunch, drinks.

Caribe Aquatic Adventures

P.O. Box 9024278, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902, (787) 724-1882, fax (787) 723-6770 **Dives** ▶ San Juan, Fajardo. **What sets them apart** ▶ Beach reef dives 4 times daily, caters to beginners and advanced, small groups. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 4 dives, meals not included, \$420 per person, dbl. occ.

Mundo Submarino

Laguna Gardens Shopping Center, Isla Verde, PO Box 29043, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00929, (787) 791-5764, fax (787) 791-5764 e-mail: mundosub@tld.net, internet: www.tld.net/users/mundosub. **Dives** ▶ Puerto Rico's east, south and west coasts including Culebra, Vieques, Desecheo and Mona islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Experienced staff, sales, instruction, referrals, diving and snorkeling trips, aquatic summer camp for kids. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 2 boat dives, transportation, light lunch, refreshments, equipment, \$125.

YAUCO

Ocean Scuba Shop

Calle Dr. Gatell #1, Yauco, Puerto Rico 00698, (787) 856-8206, fax (787) 856-8206 **Dives** ► South and west sides of Guánica. **What sets them apart** ► Quick trips to sites, emphasis on safety.

Red Sea/ Indian Ocean

Nearly landlocked, the Red Sea is a stark, watery contrast to the surrounding desert. The steep drop-offs of the narrow ocean are crowded with the northernmost fully-developed reef system in the world, a colorful and dense aggregation of Indo-Pacific marine life.

Located south of the Equator and 1,000 miles east of Kenya in the Indian Ocean, the isolated islands of Seychelles are home to many species of fish and coral found nowhere else. The Maldives, located off the southern tip of India, feature beautiful shallow reefs and fast currents.

Weather

Surrounded by desert, temperature on a visit to the Red Sea can reach 100 degrees or more during the day. The Indian Ocean is affected by seasonal monsoons.

Average Water Temp

Red Sea temps range from the low-70Fs in winter to the low-80Fs in summer. The waters of the Seychelles and Maldives stay consistently warm year-round.

Visibility

Consistently clear, although localized plankton blooms in the Red Sea can cut vis to 30 feet.

Getting There

Egypt Air and TWA are the only airlines that offer direct flights from New York to Cairo, with connections to Hurghada and Sharm El Sheikh, which also can be flown to via European cities including Rome and Frankfurt. Travelers to Israel must first fly to Tel Aviv. Air Seychelles, British Airways and Air France fly to the Seychelles, while Air Maldives serves the Maldives Islands.

Diving

Ras Muhammed Wall off the tip of the Sinai Peninsula offers the full spectrum of marine life from small tropicals to cruising sharks. Hurghada's Abu Nahas keeps divers captivated with five shipwrecks on one dive site. In the Indian Ocean, Manta Point of Kaafu Atoll in the Maldives is a great place to see manta's during the July to December mating season. Sometimes called the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean, Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles is crowded with abundant reef life from the oriental sweetlips to giant tortoises.

DIVE OPERATORS

EGYPT

Sinai Divers



Ghazala Hotel, Sharm el Sheikh, South Sinai, Egypt, (011) 2062-600697, fax (011) 2062-600158, fax (011) 2062-600158 **Dives** ► The Egyptian Red Sea. **What sets them apart** ► 26 years in Sinai, only land-based operator in Sharm el Sheikh, 2 live-aboards in Sinai and 2 live-aboards in southern Egypt. **Booking office** ► Tropical Adventures Travel, International Diving Expeditions, See & Sea Travel, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel. **Best buy** ► Call for rates. **Resort affiliation** ► Ghazala Hotel.

ISRAEL

Aqua Sport International

Box 300, Eilat, Israel 88102, (011) 9727-6334404, fax (011) 9727-6333771, internet: www.aquasport.com **Dives** ► Eilat and the Sinai, from Eilat to Sharm el Sheikh. **What sets them apart** ► PADI 5-star facility, Only dive operation on the beach. 2 other locations at Taba and Nuweiba, Sinai, Egypt. **Best buy** ► \$30 per day with tanks and weights.

Coral Sea Divers

Carlton Hotel, Coral Beach, P.O. Box 1384, Eilat, Israel 88113, (011) 9727-6370337, fax (011) 9727-6370486 **Dives** ► Eilat, Sinai and Egypt. **What sets them apart** ► Offers VIP service. **Booking office** ► Adventure Express, International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel. **Best buy** ► 6 days, 12 dives, \$130, or with full equipment, \$229. **Resort affiliation** ► Carlton Hotel.

Dolphin Reef Dive Center

Southern Beach, Box 104, Eilat, Israel 88100, (011) 9727-6375935, fax (011) 9727-6373824, e-mail: reef@netvision.net.il **Dives** ► Eilat, Israel. **What sets them apart** ► Dolphin encounters, snorkeling, nitrox courses, rebreather courses, PADI, NAUI, SSI, CMAS. **Best buy** ► 6 days diving, 2 dives daily, hotel pickup, \$200.

SEYCHELLES

Underwater Centre Seychelles

PO Box 384, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles, (011) 248-344223, fax (011) 248-344223, e-mail: divesey@seychelles.net, internet: www.seychelles.net/divesey. **Dives** ► Mahe and Praslin Islands, Seychelles. **What sets them apart** ► PADI 5-Star centers, 3 locations, whale shark tagging program, live-aboard trips. **Booking office** ► Seychelles Tourist Office (212-687-9766). **Best buy** ► 14 nights, from \$1,205, excluding airfare.

South America

This continent is the sleeping giant of American dive tourism. Brazil claims more than 4,600 miles of shoreline with diving spectaculars like the wrecks of Recife and the isolated archipelago of Fernando de Noronha. Though faced with increased fishing pressures, the rich Galapagos Islands remain the holy grail for advanced divers, with more species

SOUTH AMERICA

diversity than any other place on the planet. And few people realize that Venezuela has more miles of Caribbean coastline that everyone else combined, not to mention the Caribbean's oldest marine park, Los Roques.

Weather

Tropical, except in the extreme southern areas.

Average Water Temp

Mid-80Fs in summer in the north, dropping to mid-70Fs in winter. In the Galapagos, temps vary widely due to mixing currents, from 65F to 80F on the surface, down to 50Fs at depth.

Visibility

Varies from 200 feet in Brazil's Fernando de Noronha and Venezuela's Los Roques, to 30 to 50 feet in nutrient-rich areas like the Galapagos, where vis averages 75 feet but can change quickly.

Getting There

Brazil—Direct flights from New York and Miami. Galapagos—Flights from Miami and Houston to Quito or Guayaquil, Ecuador, then commuter flights to San Cristobal or Baltra islands. Venezuela—Direct flights from Miami and New York to Margarita Island (staging area for most diving) and Caracas, for a commuter flight to Margarita.

Diving

Brazil—The Bay of Dolphins in Noronha is not just a clever name. A socialized pod of 600 spinners live and play with divers here. Galapagos—the mixing of cold and warm ocean currents produce waters Manhattan-thick with pelagic fish around Wolf Island and rare endemic species at Tagus Cove. Venezuela—the 72 islands of the Los Roques archipelago feature classic Caribbean diving at sites like Jewfish Rock.



DIVE OPERATORS

BRAZIL

Atlantis Divers

Fernando de Noronha, Brazil, (011) 55-81-6191371 **Dives** ► Fernando de Noronha. **What sets them apart** ► Dives wrecks, caverns, volcanic rock and coral formations, Bay of Dolphins, diving with sharks, turtles and rays. **Booking offices** ► Dive Tours, Waters Edge Travel. **Best buy** ►

SOUTH AMERICA

Roundtrip airfare from Recife to Fernando de Noronha, 7 nights accommodations, 5 days of 2-tank diving, transfers, taxes, all meals, \$1,225 all-inclusive.

Expedição E Atlantico

Recife, Brazil, (011) 55-81-3411796 **Dives** ▶ Wrecks of Recife, off northeast coast of Brazil. **What sets them apart** ▶ 12 wrecks in area, warm, clear water, abundance of fish and coral. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Tours, Waters Edge Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 3 days, \$475, includes accommodations, daily breakfast, taxes, transfers, 6 wreck dives.

Submariner

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, (888) 627-2945, (011) 55-71-237-4097 **Dives** ▶ Morro de Sao Paulo, Bahia de Todos dos Santos, Chapada Diamantina. **Booking office** ▶ Waters Edge Travel.

VENEZUELA

Octopus

Av. Bolivar #31-30, Porlamar, Estado Nuevo Esparta, Margarita Island, Venezuela, (011) 5895-611535, fax (011) 5895-618258 **Dives** ▶ Bird Rock, Mucura Coral Reef, Los Frailes, Los Roques, La Blanquilla, Los Testigos and Los Hermanos. **Booking office** ▶ Dive Tours. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary.

Turks & Caicos

The Turks & Caicos Islands sit atop two shallow banks separated by a narrow, trench-like channel. Off Grand Turk, a sloping shelf slides from the

beach down to 40 feet within a half-mile, then goes vertical to more than 600 feet. A few miles away, the bottom lies at 12,500 feet. On the charts, the edge of this dramatic cliff is littered with little x's; coral heads so shallow they break the surface at low tide. This happy conjunction of shallow banks and abyssal depths means huge sponges, healthy corals, dense concentrations of reef life and visits from deep-water dwellers like sharks and rays. Above water, the islands are as unspoiled as the reefs that circle them.

Weather

Mild year-round, with average daytime temperatures ranging from a low of 75F in winter to 90F in summer.

Average Water Temp

Around 80F in summer and a few degrees less in winter.

Visibility

Variable, depending on the amount of plankton in the water, but there are plenty of days with 100 feet or more.

Getting There

From the U.S., American Airlines flies to Providenciales from Miami. Turks & Caicos Airways offers inter-island flights.

Diving

At Providenciales's Chimney, divers drop into an eight-foot-wide cut in a wall of

plate corals at 50 feet and follow it out at 80 feet. Massive anchors, encrusted cannons, strands of anchor chain and profuse marine life lie at 40 feet off Great Sand Cay, marking the wreck of the *HMS Endymion*, which went down in a 1790 hurricane. At Grand Turk's Tunnels, sand chutes slope down to the entrance of twin tunnels that run from 50 to 100 feet and emerge on a wall plastered with sponges and gorgonians.

DIVE OPERATORS

GRAND TURK

Blue Water Divers

PO Box 124, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos, (809) 946-2432, fax (809) 946-2432 e-mail: mrolling@caribsurf.com, internet: www.microplan.com/blueake.htm. **Dives** ▶ Grand Turk, Salt Cay and Turks



READER RATINGS/PROVIDENCIALES

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	SCORE
QUALITY OF WALLS											87.2
ADVANCED DIVING											83.4
HEALTH OF REEFS											82.8
PHOTOGRAPHY											82.0
FISH LIFE											76.0
BEGINNER DIVING											75.2
VALUE											75.2
SNORKELING											73.6
BIG ANIMALS											66.8

& Caicos Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 15 years experience, specializes in wall diving. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 6-day package, \$346.50.

Cecil Ingham's Sea Eye Diving of Grand Turk

Duke St., Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos, (800) 810-3483, (809) 946-1407, fax (809) 946-1407 e-mail: ci@caribsurf.com, internet: www.interlog.com/~reefnet/GTurk. **Dives** ▶ Grand Turk wall. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service shop, photo support and services, E-6, PADI and NAUI instruction, ITCs available on-site. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, PADI Travel Network, Scuba Voyages. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 5 days diving, continental breakfast daily, transfers, unlimited shore diving, gov't bed tax, \$665 per person, dbl. occ.

Oasis Divers

PO Box 137, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos Islands, (800) 892-3995, (809) 946-1128, fax (809) 946-1128 e-mail: oasisdiv@caribsurf.com, internet: www.oasisdivers.com. **Dives** ▶ Coral Garden, Black Forest, The Library, Amphitheater, Aquarium, Tunnels. **What sets them apart** ▶ Full-service operation, gear handling and setup, drinks, refreshments and towels onboard. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days of 2-tank diving, daily breakfast, transfers, taxes, unlimited shore diving, rooms have full kitchens and separate bedrooms, \$822 per person.

Salt Raker Inn

Duke St., PO Box 1, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos, (809) 946-2260, fax (809) 946-2817 e-mail: mrolling@caribsurf.com, internet: www.microplan.com/blueake.htm. **Dives** ▶ South Caicos, walls, wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, live entertainment. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights accommodations, 12 dives, transfers, \$599.

PROVIDENCIALES

Art Pickering's Provo Turtle Divers

Turtle Cove Marina, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, BWI, (800) 833-1341, (809) 946-4232, fax (809) 946-5296 e-mail: proturtl@caribsurf.com, internet: www.provo.net/ptd. **Dives** ▶ West Caicos, North West Point, Pine Cay, Grace Bay, French Cay and Southwest Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Was rated top 5 day boat operator in *RSD's* 1996 Reader Ratings, oldest operation in Turks & Caicos. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures

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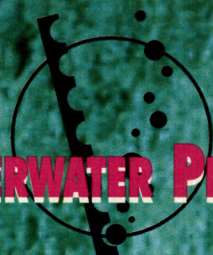
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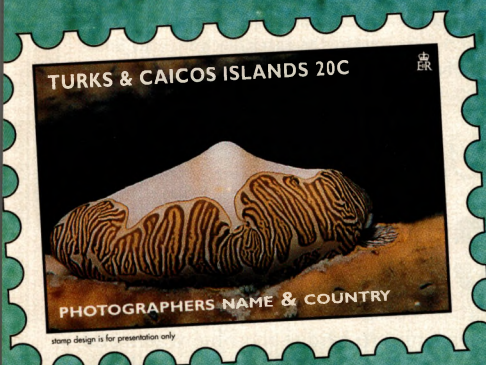
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CIRCLE NO. 104 ON READER SERVICE CARD

For more information on the Turks and Caicos Islands and the competition, please call the Turks and Caicos Tourist Board at **800-241-0824** or **809-946-2321**, or dive into the web sites at <http://www.ttc.co.uk/t&c/> or <http://www.underwaterphoto.com> or contact one of the advertisers listed.

TURKS & CAICOS

Dive Travel, Go/Liberty (201-934-3500), Ocean Connections, PADI Travel Network, Poseidon Venture Tours, Travel Plan (215-483-8317). **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 4 2-tank dives, transfers, guide, taxes, \$467 per person (summer rate), call for group rates for 12 or more divers. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Turtle Cove Inn & Ocean Club.

Club Med/Turquoise

Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands, BWI, (800) CLUB-MED, (809) 945-5491 internet: www.clubmed.com. **Dives** ▶ North West Point, Grace Bay, Pine Cay, West Caicos. **What sets them apart** ▶ Resort courses, open-water advanced instruction. **Best buy** ▶ 13 dives, equipment rental, \$125. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Club Med Turquoise.

Dive Provo

Turquoise Reef Resort & Casino, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, (800) 234-7768, (809) 946-5029, fax (809) 946-5936 e-mail: diveprovo@netrunner.net. **Dives** ▶ North West Point, West Caicos, French Cay, Pine Cay, Grace Bay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on customer service, daily afternoon dives, scheduled night dives, PADI 5-star. **Booking offices** ▶ Into the Blue, Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas, PADI Travel Network, Scuba Travel Ventures, Travel Plan Divers (800-6-DIVE-IN). **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 6 2-tanks morning dives, transfers, taxes, \$731 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Turquoise Reef Resort & Casino.

Flamingo Divers

Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, (800) 204-9282, (809) 946-4193, fax (809) 946-4193 e-mail: flamingo@caribsurf.com, internet: www.fortmeyers.com/turks/flamdiv.html. **Dives** ▶ West Caicos, French Cay, North West Point, Southwest reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, 2 instructors/boat, caters to small groups, fast boats. **Best buy** ▶ 5 nights, 5 dives, \$570.

Sandals/Beaches Turks & Caicos

Box 186, Lower Byte Rd., Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, (800) SANDALS, (809) 946-8000, fax (809) 946-8001 **Dives** ▶ Grace Bay, North West Point, West Caicos. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located at all-inclusive resort.

Turtle In Divers

Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, (800) 359-3483, (809) 941-5389, fax (815) 623-6574 e-mail: turtlein@aol.com, internet: www.charternet.com/diveboat/turtlein. **Dives** ▶ Providenciales, West Caicos. **Booking offices** ▶ Caradonna Caribbean Tours, Caribbean Dive Tours, Tropical Tours, U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 6 days diving, taxes, transfers, \$672; packages available with Erebus Inn, Le Deck Hotel, Turtle Cove Inn.

SALT CAY

Salt Cay Divers

Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos, (888) SALT-CAY, (809) 946-6906, fax (809) 946-6906 e-mail: scdivers@caribsurf.com. **Dives** ▶ Salt Cay, Grand Turk, Great Sand Cay, *HMS Endymion*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wall diving, whale watching, 3-tank boat dives daily, unlimited shore diving. **Best buy** ▶ 1 week including all meals, hotel, 3 boat dives/day, horseback riding, \$895.

SOUTH CAICOS

Club Carib Resorts

South Caicos, Turks & Caicos, (800) 581-2582, (305) 258-1177, fax (305) 257-2072 e-mail: helene@clubcarib.com, internet: www.clubcarib.com. **Dives** ▶ Wall sites 5 minutes from dock. **What sets them apart** ▶ Close to dive sites, large marine life. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 6 nights, 3 meals daily, 3 dives daily, \$599 per person, dbl. occ.

WEST CAICOS

Caicos Adventures

PO Box 47, Turks & Caicos Islands, BWI, (809) 941-3346, fax (809) 941-3346 **Dives** ▶ West Caicos and French Cay. **What sets them apart** ▶ Specializes in West Caicos sites, night dives, unchartered dive sites, lunch everyday. **Booking office** ▶ USA Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, 14 dives, \$730.

U.S. Virgin Islands

Covered in lush, green vegetation, the three volcanic peaks that make up the U.S. Virgin Islands, climb straight out of the Caribbean/Atlantic, as if attempting to bridge the blue water and blue sky. Natural beauty? These islands have it above and below.

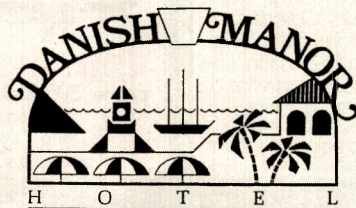
While they share common traits, including unbeatable convenience for U.S. divers (no currency changes and no customs or immigration hassles), each of the islands has a different personality.

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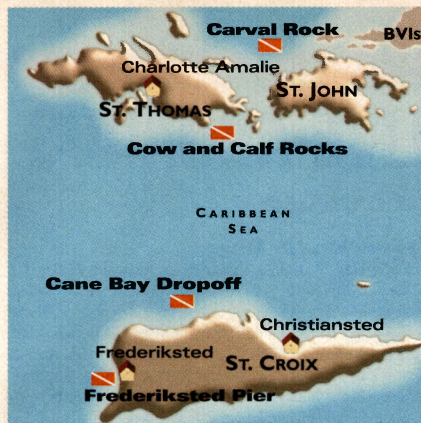
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CIRCLE NO. 107 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Weather

Mild year-round with average temperatures in the 80Fs.

Average Water Temp

Mid-80Fs in summer, dropping to the upper-70Fs in winter.

Visibility

Varies between 80 and 120 feet, depending on seas and plankton.

Getting There

American and Delta Airlines offer the only regular direct flights to St. Thomas with continuing service to St. Croix. Carnival, Continental, TWA, United and US Airways offer connecting flights through San Juan, Puerto Rico. St. John can only be reached by ferry boat from St. Thomas.

Diving

Cow and Calf Rocks off St. Thomas is a shallow labyrinth of swim-throughs, tunnels and undercuts. St. John's Carval Rock is a coral- and sponge-encrusted islet with dramatic rock formations and visiting pelagics. Cane Bay Dropoff is St. Croix's nearshore wall, the deep complement to Frederiksted Pier, a popular shallow and night dive with plenty of macro photo subjects.

DIVE OPERATORS

ST. CROIX

Anchor Dive Center

Salt River Marine National Park, Box 5588 SI, St. Croix USVI 00823, (800) 532-3483, (809) 778-1522, fax (809) 778-1522 Dives ► "The Seven Wonders of St. Croix," Shark Shanty, West Wall Salt River, Anchor Wall Drift, Jimmy's Surpasse, East Wall Salt River and White Horse Reef. **What sets them apart** ► 5-minute ride to dive sites, 6 divers max., gear storage, 5-star PADI and IDC instruction, immediate return to docks after diving. **Best buy** ► 3-day packages start at \$165 per day.

Cane Bay Dive Shop

Box 4510, Kings Hill, St. Croix, USVI 00851, (800) 338-3843, (809) 773-9913, fax (809) 778-5442 e-mail: 103642.3220@compuserve.com, internet: ecani.com. Dives ► North side of St. Croix, Cane Bay, Twin Palms and various wrecks on the west side. **What sets them apart** ► Offers a wide variety of boat, wreck, cave, pier and shore dives. **Best buy** ► 7 days, 8 nights, 5 2-tank boat dives, unlimited shore diving, \$624.

Cruzan Divers

12 Strand St., Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI 00840, (800) 352-0107, (809) 772-3701, fax (809) 772-1852 Dives ► West end of St. Croix, south shore, Butler Bay wrecks. **What**

sets them apart ► Close to wrecks of Frederiksted Pier. **Booking office** ► PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ► 3 nights, 4 days, diving, lodging, transfers, \$365.

Dive Experience

Box 4254, Christiansted, St. Croix USVI 00822, (800) 235-9047, (809) 773-3307, fax (809) 773-7030 Dives ► North shore of St. Croix. **What sets them apart** ► Emphasis on safety, offers fish feeds, PADI 5-star IDC center. **Booking office** ► Southerland Tours (800-524-2022). **Best buy** ► 4 nights, 6 tanks, includes breakfast, \$371.

V. I. Divers

Pan Am Pavillion, Suite 11, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI 00820, (800) 544-5911, (809) 773-6045, fax (809) 773-2859 e-mail: vidivers@aol.com, internet: www.padi.com/vidivers.htm. Dives ► North and west shores of St. Croix. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, professional staff, custom dive boats. **Best buy** ► 5 nights at Danish Manor Hotel, 6 dives, \$421 per person, dbl. occ.

WaterWorld Divers, Ltd.

PO Box 24782, Gallows Bay, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, (800) 523-3483, (809) 692-9405, fax (809) 773-9651 e-mail: stxcuba@aol.com. Dives ► North shore dive sites, Buck Island National Monument. **What sets them apart** ► Only dive facility on St. Croix east end, comfortable boat, only operator allowed to dive Buck Island National Monument. **Booking office** ► Packages available through Buccaneer Hotel (809-773-2100), King Christian (809-773-2285), Tamarind Reef Hotel (809-773-4455).

The Waves at Cane Bay

P.O. Box 1749, Kingshill, St. Croix, USVI 00851, (800) 545-0603, (809) 778-1805, fax (809) 778-4945 Dives ► Cane Bay, North Star, The Pier. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, PADI instruction, private refresher courses, guided

dives. **Best buy** ► 8 days, 7 nights, 6 boat dives, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, room w/kitchen, \$549 per person.

ST. JOHN

Coral Divers at Coral Bay Watersports

10-19 Estate Carolina, St. John, USVI 00830, (809) 693-5938, fax (809) 776-6850 e-mail: buck@islands.vi, internet: www.usvi.net. Dives ► Eagle Shoals, caverns, swim-throughs. **What sets them apart** ► Meditative "Zen" approach to diving and instruction, caters to small groups, uncrowded boats.

Cruz Bay Watersports Co.

PO Box 252, Great Cruz Bay, St. John USVI, (800) 835-7730, (809) 776-6234, fax (809) 693-8720 e-mail: woodymo@ix.net.com, internet: www.nauai.org, www.padi.com. Dives ► Caribbean and Atlantic sites, Pillsbury Sound. **What sets them apart** ► Diving 365 days/year, permanent staff of 18, 2 retail diving stores, 15 years experience, personal service, snorkel tours, BVI excursions. **Best buy** ► 3 days, 6 tanks, \$198 per person; 5 days, 10 tanks, \$265 per person; daily dives, \$68 per person.

Low Key Watersports

Box 716 Wharfside Village Cruz Bay, St. John 00831, (800) 835-7718, (809) 693-8999, fax (809) 693-8987 e-mail: divelowkey@msn.com, internet: www.ad435@virgin.usvi.net. Dives ► Conga Cay, Grass Cay, Little St. James, General Rogers, Carvel Rock, Low Key Shoals, Eagle Shoal, Cow and Calf, and the Leaf, wreck of the Rhone. **What sets them apart** ► Personal service, photographic services. **Booking office** ► PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ► Dive package includes 7 nights accommodations, 6 tanks of diving, luxury guest cottage, water views, jacuzzi, \$653 per person, dbl. occ.

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7147 Bolongo · St. Thomas, USVI 00802

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809-776-2381

E-MAIL Bill2381@MSN.COM

Paradise Watersports

P.O. Box 54, Cruz Bay, St. John, USVI 00830, (809) 693-8690, fax (809) 693-8690 **Dives** ▶ Offshore cays, open-water sites of St. Thomas and St. John. **What sets them apart** ▶ More than 20 years experience in the Virgin Islands. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary.

ST. THOMAS
Admiralty Dive Center

Windward Passage Hotel, Veterans Dr., St. Thomas, USVI 00802, (800) 524-7389, (809) 777-9802, fax (809) 777-9802 **Dives** ▶ St. Thomas and St. John. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, advanced dive locations, small groups of 6 divers, wreck diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Carib Beach Resort (800-774-2525), Emerald Beach Resort (800-233-4936), PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, transfers, equipment, 12 dives, 1 night dive, \$669-\$965 per person, dbl. occ. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Windward Passage Hotel.

Chris Sawyer Diving Center

6300 Estate Frydenhoj, Suite 29, St. Thomas, USVI 00802-1411, (800) 882-2965, (809) 775-7320, fax (809) 775-9495 **Dives** ▶ East end of St. Thomas, including all cays north of St. John, wreck of the *Rhone*, *General Rogers*, Pelican Cay, Eagle Shoal. **What sets them apart** ▶ 15 years experience, personal service. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

Coki Dive and Snorkel Center

P.O. Box 502096, St. Thomas, USVI 00805, (800) 474-COKI, (809) 775-4220, fax (809) 775-4220 **Dives** ▶ Coki Beach. **What sets them apart** ▶ Located on beach, caters to referrals and new divers, night diving. **Best buy** ▶ Packages available. Call for rates.

Dive In!

P.O. Box 5664, Sapphire Resort and Marina, St. Thomas, USVI 00803, (800) 524-2090, ext. 2144, (809) 775-6100, ext. 2144, fax (809) 775-2403 **Dives** ▶ Congo Cay, Grassy Cay, Tunnels of Thatch, *General Rogers*, *WIT Shoal*, *HMS Rhone*. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, caters to small groups, emphasis on individual divers' needs. **Booking office** ▶ Go Go Tours. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Double Tree Sapphire Beach Resort & Marina.

Dive World

9200 Long Bay Rd., Bldg. 2, Bay 1, Vitaco Mall, St. Thomas, USVI 00802, (800) 467-0488, (809) 774-8687, fax (809) 774-7368 e-mail: diveworld@islands.vi **Dives** ▶ Coki Point Beach. **What sets them apart** ▶ 5-star instructor development center. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights of diving, accommodations, \$520.

Sea Trade Ltd.

505 Crown Bay Marina, St. Thomas, USVI 00802, (809) 774-2001, fax (809) 777-9600 e-mail: diveusvi@aol.com, internet: www.divenetwork.com/seatrade.htm. **Dives** ▶ More than 58 sites, primarily on south coast, several wrecks and reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wreck diving. **Booking office** ▶ The Scuba Mart Inc. (800-843-8362). **Best buy** ▶ 6-dive package, full gear, \$175; 10 dives, full gear, \$275.

St. Thomas Diving Club

7147 Bolongo Bay, St. Thomas USVI 00802, (800) LETS-DIVE, (809) 776-2381, fax (809) 777-3232 e-mail: bill2381@msn.com. **Dives** ▶ Buck Island, *WIT Shoal*, *Rhone*, French Cap, Cow and Calf. **What sets them apart** ▶ Wide variety of scheduled dives, including wreck, deep and shallow, small groups, custom dive packages, PADI 5-Star training center, referrals. **Booking office** ▶ Bolongo Resorts (800-524-4746). **Best buy** ▶ \$75 per person, per day, dbl. occ., includes unlimited diving. **Resort affiliation** ▶ Bolongo Resort.

LIVE-ABOARDS

AUSTRALIA
Down Under Dive

155 Sheridan St., Cairns, Queensland, Australia 4870, (011) 6170-311288, fax (011) 6170-311373, e-mail: dudive@oze mail.com.au, internet: www.ozmail.com.au/~dudive. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier, Norman, Saxon and Hastings Reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 140-foot tallship, 40 passengers. A new diving site on the Great Barrier Reef each day. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Oz Dive. **Best buy** ▶ Packages may vary. Dive and sail 3 days, 2 nights, diving, meals, \$375.

Elizabeth E II

102 Goldsmith St., Queensland, Australia, (011) 6179-574281, fax (011) 6179-572268 **Dives** ▶ Coral Sea and Great Barrier Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ 108 feet, 13 cabins. Specializes in long-range trips. **Booking office** ▶ See & Sea Travel.

Mike Ball/Spoilsport

252 Walker St., Townsville, Queensland, Australia, (888) MIKE-BALL, (011) 6177-723022, fax (011) 6177-212152, e-mail: mikeball@t140.aone.net.au, internet: www.mikeball.com. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, SS *Yongala* wreck. **What sets them apart** ▶ 100-foot vessel, 14 cabins. Deluxe yacht, focus on service. **Booking offices** ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions (see number above), See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Mike Ball/Supersport

252 Walker St., Townsville, Queensland, Australia, (888) MIKE-BALL, (011) 6177-723022, fax (011) 6177-212152, e-mail: mikeball@t140.aone.net.au, internet: www.mikeball.com. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Cod Hole. **What sets them apart** ▶ 90 feet, 15 cabins. Stable, spacious, low-level flights to Lizard Island. **Booking offices** ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions (see number above), See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Mike Ball/Watersport

252 Walker St., Townsville, Queensland, Australia, (888) MIKE-BALL, (011) 6177-723022, fax (011) 6177-212152, e-mail: mikeball@t140.aone.net.au, internet: www.mikeball.com. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef, SS *Yongala*. **What sets them apart** ▶ 70-foot boat, 8 cabins. Offers 2-night trips to the *Yongala* wreck. **Booking offices** ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions (see number above), See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Nimrod III

46 Spence St., Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (011) 6170-315566, fax (011) 6170-312431 **Dives** ▶ Northern Great Barrier Reef, Ribbon Reefs, Cod Hole; Coral Sea charters only. **What sets them apart** ▶ 70- by 26-foot steel-hulled catamaran, 6 air-conditioned cabins, private bathrooms, 18 passengers max. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Pacific Star Dive Charters

P.O. Box 326, Cannonvale, Whitsunday, Queensland, Australia 4802, (011) 6179-466383, fax (011) 6179-466901 e-mail: pacstar@whitsunday.net.au, internet: www.whitsunday.net.au/pacstar/pacstar.htm. **Dives** ▶ Central Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea, including SS *Yongala*, and Lihou, Flinders, Marion and Abington Reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 65 feet, 6 cabins. Caters to small groups, offers personal service. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Dive Adventures, Dive Discovery, International Diving Expeditions, Oz Dive, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

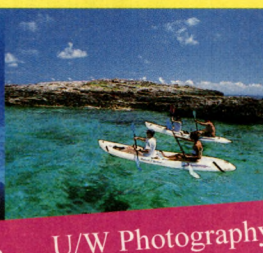
Pro Dive Cairns/Kalinda

116 Spence St., Marlin Parade, Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (011) 6170-315255, fax (011) 6170-519555 e-mail: pro dive@internetnorth.com.au. **Dives** ▶ Cairns' easternmost outer Great Barrier Reefs, Milln, Thetford, Flynn and Pel-lowe, and 16 mooring sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ 21-meter vessel, 25 passengers max, 5 crew members, 8 cabins from twin to multi-share. Experienced crew, uncrowded diving. **Booking office** ▶ Adventure Express. **Best buy** ▶ 3 day/2 night live-aboard cruise to outer reef, all gear, computer, meals, accommodations on board, hotel transfers and reef tax, \$AUS395.

Pro Dive Cairns/MV Stella Maris

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Palau

LIVE-ABOARDS

6170-315255, fax (011) 6170-519955, e-mail: prodive@internorth.com.au. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef of Australia. **What sets them apart** ▶ 70-foot boat, 18 passengers max. Experienced crew, uncrowded diving. **Booking office** ▶ Adventure Express. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. 3-day, 2-night all-inclusive package, 11 dives, \$AUS395.

Reef Explorer

Box 1090, Cairns, Queensland, Australia 4870, (011) 6170-939113, fax (011) 6170-939112, e-mail: reefies@ozemail.com.au, internet: www.ozemail.com.au/~reefies. **Dives** ▶ Far northern Great Barrier Reef, outer Coral Sea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 65-foot boat, 5 cabins. Caters to small groups, 10 divers max., offers off-the-beaten-track diving for experienced divers and photographers, private charters. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Dive Discovery, International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 12 days, 11 nights, all-inclusive, \$2,995 (April-Aug.).

Rum Runner I, III & V

Box 6608, Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (800) 842-4904, (011) 6170-427430, fax (011) 6170-521488, e-mail: rumrunner@internorth.com.au, internet: www.internorth.com.au/rumrunner/. **Dives** ▶ Coral Sea, Great Barrier Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ Remote diving areas, specializes in small groups. **Booking office** ▶ Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for details.

Spirit of Freedom

PO Box 78, Pyrmont, New South Wales, Australia, (011) 6129-5526300, fax (011) 6129-5523328, internet: www.flagshipcharters.com.au. **Dives** ▶ Coral Sea, Torres Straits. **What sets them apart** ▶ 34.9-meter luxury cruiser, 11 cabins, 24 passengers max. **Booking offices** ▶ Oz Dive, Poseidon Venture Tours. **Best buy** ▶ Charter basis only, call for details.

Taka II

131 Lake St., Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (800) 241-7690, (011) 6170-518722, fax (011) 6170-312739, e-mail: takadive@ozemail.com.au, internet: www.ozemail.com.au/~takadive. **Dives** ▶ Great Barrier Reef, Cod Hole and the Coral Sea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 72-foot vessel, 10 cabins. Emphasis on underwater photography, offers

shark and cod feedings. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, International Diving Expeditions, Oz Dive, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 4-day, 3-night trips to Cod Hole; 5-day, 4-night trips to Osprey Reef and Cod Hole available. Call for rates.

Tusa Dive Connection

CRN Aplin St. & the Esplanade, Cairns, Queensland, Australia, (011) 6170-311248, fax (011) 6170-315221, e-mail: tusa@c130.aone.net.au, internet: www.abacus.com/mall/tusa/index.htm **Dives** ▶ Coral Sea, Cod Hole, Ribbon Reefs. **What sets them apart** ▶ Small groups. **Booking office** ▶ Oz Dive.

Undersea Explorer

Box 5740, Cairns, Queensland, Australia 4870, (800) 388-7333, (011) 6170-514777, fax (011) 6170-514888 e-mail: adventures@adventures.com.au, internet: www.adventures.com.au. **Dives** ▶ Northern Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Osprey Reef, various wrecks. **What sets them apart** ▶ 80-foot boat, 11 cabins. Special marine biology trips, active interaction with both researchers and underwater animals. **Booking office** ▶ Great Expeditions (888-SNORKEL). **Best buy** ▶ 7-day dive trip to Coral Sea, 20 dives, \$1,150 per person.

BAHAMAS

MV Ballymena

13 Shirley St., PO Box N7775, Nassau, Bahamas, (800) 241-4591, (242) 394-0951, fax (242) 394-0948, e-mail: ballymena@bahamas.net.bs, internet: www.bahamas.net.bs/ballymena. **Dives** ▶ Bahama Out Islands, including Exuma Cays, Andros, Cat Island, San Salvador, Conception Island, Rum Cay, Long Island and Crooked Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ 124-foot vessel with 10 double staterooms, each with private bath and individually controlled A/C. Also offers a variety of activities besides diving. **Booking office** ▶ Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ Selected weeks in 1997 from \$1,695 per person; 7 days, 6 nights, 2-3 dives/day, all meals and beverages.

Blackbeard's Cruises

PO Box 661091, Miami Springs, FL 33266, (800) 327-9600, (305) 888-1226, fax (305) 884-4214, e-mail: sales@black

beard-cruises.com, internet: www.blackbeard-cruises.com. **Dives** ▶ Bimini, Berry Islands, Exumas, Grand Bahama. **What sets them apart** ▶ Owns fleet of live-aboard sailboats. **Best buy** ▶ 1-week cruise, all-inclusive, \$689.

Bottom Time II

PO Box 156, Dania, FL 33004, (800) 234-8464, (954) 921-7798, fax (954) 920-5578 **Dives** ▶ Entire Bahama chain, Dominican Republic humpback whale expeditions. **What sets them apart** ▶ 90-foot boat, 14 cabins. 22-knot speed, stable design, 6 heads. **Best buy** ▶ 7-day, 6-night charter, \$1,295.

Cat Palu Cruises

P.O. Box 661091, Miami Springs, FL 33266, (800) 327-9600, (305) 888-1226, fax (305) 884-4214, e-mail: cat@blackbeard-cruises.com, internet: www.blackbeard-cruises.com/catpalu.html. **Dives** ▶ Exuma Islands, Eleuthera. **What sets them apart** ▶ 12-passenger live-aboard, dives remote areas, luxury catamaran departs from Nassau. **Best buy** ▶ 1 week, all-inclusive, \$1,195 per person.

Dream Too

241 First Ave., Indialantic, FL 32903, (800) 741-5335, (407) 768-9859, fax (407) 676-0952 **Dives** ▶ Grand Bahama, Walkers Cay and Bimini. **What sets them apart** ▶ 60-foot boat, 2 cabins. Specializes in snorkeling trips, 10-12 passengers max., emphasis on marine ecology, 35 years experience in Bahamas. **Best buy** ▶ Week-long cruise including taxes, port fee, \$945 and up.

Nekton Pilot

Fort Lauderdale, FL, (800) 899-6753, (954) 463-9324, fax (954) 463-8938, e-mail: nekton@nektoncruises.com, internet: nektoncruises.com. **Dives** ▶ Cay Sal Bank, Freeport and Gingerbread Grounds, Rum Cay, Cat Island, San Salvador, Conception Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Elevating dive platform, private cabins with baths, snorkel program with designated snorkel sites.

RV Sea Dragon

717 SW Coconut Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL, (954) 522-0161, fax (954) 522-0161 **Dives** ▶ Northern Exuma Cays, summer trips to Conception Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers a 65-foot vessel with 4 double cabins, 8 passengers max. Small groups, crew has 25 years experience diving remote areas of the Bahamas. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages based on char-

The Rembrandt



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Box 398276, Miami, FL 33239-0276, (800) 443-3837, (305) 531-3483, fax (305) 531-3127, e-mail: seafever@safari.net, internet: www.seafever.com. **Dives** ▶ Bimini, Cay Sal Bank, Freeport, Nassau and other sites. **What sets them apart** ▶ Offers 90-foot vessel with 7 double occupancy, air-conditioned cabins. Also offers nitrox diving and certification courses, shark dives and dolphin encounters. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days/6 nights, \$1,299 (summer) per person, \$1,199 (fall) per person.

BAY ISLANDS

Bay Islands Aggressor III

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Roatan, Utila, Guanaja, Cayos Cochinos. **What sets them apart** ▶ 110-foot boat, 8 cabins. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, E-6 processing, hot tub, nitrox, rebreathers. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$1,195 (in 1997), \$1,295 (in 1998).

Isla Mia

Isla Mia, Roatan, Bay Islands, (800) 874-7636, (409) 765-1776, fax (409) 765-1775, e-mail: islamia@phoenix.net, internet: www.phoenix.net/~islamia **Dives** ▶ Roatan, Bay Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Family owned and operated, built by divers for divers, 70% guest return rate. **Booking offices** ▶ Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel, World Dive Adventures, Roatan Charter. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Peter Hughes/Wind Dancer

6851 Yumuri St., Coral Gables, FL, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Roatan, Utila, Guanaja, Cayos Cochinos. **What sets them apart** ▶ 120-foot vessel, 10 cabins, 20 passengers max. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

BELIZE

Belize Aggressor III

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504)

385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Turneffe Atoll, Belize. **What sets them apart** ▶ 110-foot boat, 8 cabins. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, private heads and showers in each cabin, hot tub, E-6 processing, separate salon and dining area, rebreathers, nitrox. **Best buy** ▶ \$1,595 (1997), \$1,695 (1998).

Peter Hughes/Wave Dancer

6851 Yumuri St., Coral Gables, FL 33146, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Various dive sites in Belize. **What sets them apart** ▶ 120-foot vessel with 10 cabins, 20 passengers max. All private baths. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

Rembrandt Van Rijn/Oceanwide Expeditions

15710 JFK Blvd., Suite 850, Houston, TX 77043, (800) 453-7245, (281) 987-9600, fax (281) 987-1140, e-mail: oceanwh@infohwy.com. **Dives** ▶ Belize. **What sets them apart** ▶ 184-foot boat, 16 cabins. Three-mast topsail schooner. Only live-aboard to dive all three atolls in 1-week program. **Booking offices** ▶ Best of Belize and Beyond, International Diving Expeditions, Island Dreams, Ocean Connection, Poseidon Venture Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Escapes, Tropical Travel. **Best buy** ▶ \$1,245 for 1-week cruise.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Cuan Law

Box 4065, St. Thomas, USVI 00803, (800) 648-3393, (809) 494-2490, fax (809) 494-5774, e-mail: cuanlaw@caribsurf.com. **Dives** ▶ British Virgin Islands, Leeward Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 105-foot by 44-foot trimaran, 10 cabins with twin or double beds (no bunks), each 110 square feet with private baths. Stable live-aboard experience, caters to nondiving companions. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Ocean Enterprises (800-648-3393). **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, all dives and other water-sports, 3 meals a day, snacks, nonalcoholic beverages and

beach barbecue, \$1,495.

Promenade

Box 8309, Cruz Bay, St. John, USVI 00831, (800) 526-5503, (809) 494-3853, fax (809) 494-5577 e-mail: promcruz@caribsurf.com, internet: www.yachtpromenade.com. **Dives** ▶ British Virgin Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 65-foot sailing yacht with 5 cabins. Rates for divers, nondivers, groups and families, or book the whole yacht. **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights, 10 guests, includes meals and liquor, \$1,350; gear rental, \$90.

CALIFORNIA

Catalina Scuba Luv/King Neptune

126 Catalina Ave., P.O. Box 1402, Avalon, CA 90704, (800) 262-DIVE, (310) 510-2616, fax (310) 510-0821, e-mail: prnepnet@aol.com, internet: www.padi.com/scuba_luv.htm. **Dives** ▶ Catalina kelp forests and other Channel Islands, Cortez Banks. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 dive boats operate year-round and offers large photo department and shark dives, nitrox and rebreather programs, instruction. **Booking offices** ▶ Island Charters (310-510-2616), PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ 2 nights hotel, round-trip transportation to the island, 1 day of boat diving, tanks and weights, meals, \$181 to \$219 per person.

Diving Charters, Inc./Sand Dollar

Box 2496, Corona, CA 91718, (909) 279-DIVE, (909) 279-3483, e-mail: diving@pe.net, internet: www.pe.net/~diving **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Tanks, weights and meals included on all trips, nitrox on board. **Best buy** ▶ 2- and 3-day dive trips, including all meals, accommodations, unlimited diving, \$200-\$225 (2-day); \$300-\$340 (3-day).

Horizon Charters

2803 Emerson, San Diego, CA 92106, (619) 277-7823, fax (619) 560-6811 e-mail: divesd@aol.com, internet: www.earthwindow.com/horizon **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands, Cortez Banks, Guadalupe Island and the San Benito Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ The only live-aboards in San Diego and the only boats diving Guadalupe and San Benito Islands. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days and nights, meals and air fills, approx. \$1,100.

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32 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940, (800) 560-DIVE, (408) 656-9336, fax (408) 393-0969, e-mail: pacstar@redshift.com internet: www.dive-pacstar.com **Dives** ▶ Monterey, Carmel and Big Sur. **What sets them apart** ▶ 65-foot boat with bunks for up to 24. Full-service operation. **Best buy** ▶ Travel packages by arrangement.

Peace

1557 Spinnaker Dr., #203-373, Ventura, CA 93001, (800) 984-2025, (805) 984-2025, fax (805) 984-6474, e-mail: peaceboat@aol.com. **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **Booking office** ▶ Take Me, Too! (800-494-2836).

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2801 W. Coast Hwy., Suite 220, Newport Beach, CA 92663, (888) WHALES-5, (714) 675-6240, fax (714) 650-0573 **Dives** ▶ Catalina Island, Channel Island adventures, Sea of Cortez expeditions. **What sets them apart** ▶ 115-foot yacht. **Best**

buy ▶ Sea of Cortez, Nov. and Dec. 1997, \$995 per person, includes 7 nights, round-trip airfare from LA to Loreto.

Truth Aquatics Inc.

301 W. Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara, CA 93101-3886, (805) 962-1127, fax (805) 564-6754, e-mail: taqua@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.imal.com/stores/taqua. **Dives** ▶ Channel Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Custom-built dive boats. **Best buy** ▶ 1-day to 5-day trips, including nonalcoholic drinks, snacks, meals, air fills and bunks, from \$125 per day.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Cayman Aggressor III

P.O. Box 1882, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, Cayman Brac.

What sets them apart ▶ 110 feet, 8 staterooms. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, E-6 processing, hot tub, nitrox and rebreathers on board. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 5-and-a-half days unlimited diving, night dives, transfers, all-inclusive, \$1,495.

Little Cayman Diver II

Box 273781, Tampa, FL 33688-3781, (800) 544-2722, (345) 948-1429, fax (345) 948-1527 **Dives** ▶ Little Cayman walls, Bloody Bay, Jackson Reef. **What sets them apart** ▶ 90-foot vessel with 5 cabins, each with private head and shower, 10 divers max. **Best buy** ▶ 1-week cruise, \$1,595 (high season), \$1,295 (low season).

CHUUK (TRUK)

SS Thorfinn

PO Box 1086, Weno, Chuuk, FSM 96942, (011) 691-3303040, fax (011) 691-3304253, e-mail: seaward@mail.fm, internet: www.inmax.com/thorfinn. **What sets them apart** ▶ 170-foot vessel, 11 guest rooms. Steam propelled, large crew, uncrowded diving. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, American Express Travel, Destination Micronesia, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Truk wrecks, 1 week, 5 dives/day, all meals, \$1,895; Pan-Micronesian voyage, 2 weeks, all-inclusive, \$3,895.

Truk Aggressor II

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Reefs and wrecks of Truk Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ 117-foot by 22-foot vessel with 14 passengers max. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, 7 staterooms, each with private head and shower, individual climate control, nitrox, rebreathers, E-6 processing. **Best buy** ▶ Sunday to Sunday cruise, 5.5 days diving, transfers, \$200 discount for nondivers and consecutive charters, \$1,895 (through June 29), \$2,095 (after June 29).

COCOS ISLAND, COSTA RICA

Okeanos Aggressor

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Cocos Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ 120 feet, 10 staterooms. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, private heads and showers in each cabin, E-6 processing, nitrox, rebreathers. **Best buy** ▶ 10 days, 7 days diving, \$2,495; 11 days, 8 days diving, \$2,795.

Sea Hunter

Cocos Island, Costa Rica. Dives ▶ Cocos Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ 115-foot boat, 6 double cabins, 2 triple cabins. **Booking offices** ▶ International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary, call for rates.

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

M/S Tropic Sun

241 E. Commercial Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334, (800) 327-8223, (954) 491-0333, fax (954) 772-9340, e-mail: divecruise@aol.com, internet: www.aquanautcruise.com. **Dives** ▶ Grenada, St. Vincent & the Grenadines. **What sets them apart** ▶ 165 feet, 18 cabins with twin or king beds, suite with private living area and balcony, room stewards, meals served by waiters, indoor and outdoor dining rooms, 2 certified instructors, unlimited diving. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network. **Best buy** ▶ Grenadines Islands cruise, Saturday to Saturday, includes round-trip airfare, cruise, port tax, diving and snorkeling, ship activities, \$1,495-\$2,095, depending on cabin category and departure city.

MV Caribbean Explorer

PO Box 310, Mills, WY 82644, (800) 322-3577, (307) 235-0683, fax (307) 235-0686, e-mail: expven@coffey.com, internet: www.caribexplorer.com. **Dives** ▶ Saba Marine Park, St. Kitts. **What sets them apart** ▶ 100-foot boat, 8 double cabins. Only live-aboard in area full-time, convenient diving schedule. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, three meals daily, snacks, 1 dinner ashore, 5 dives daily, all drinks, \$1,195.

Windjammer Barefoot Cruises

1759 Bay Rd., Miami Beach, FL 33139, (800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453, fax (305) 674-1219, e-mail: windbarec@aol.com, internet: www.windjammer.com. **Dives** ▶ Bay Islands, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Grenadines, West Indies.

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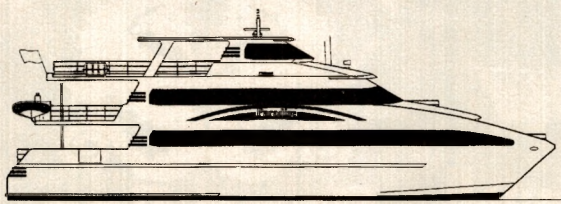
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FIJI

Bega Princess

Pacific Harbour, Viti Levu, Fiji, (011) 679-450188, fax (011) 679-450426 e-mail: stone@is.com.fj. **Dives** ▶ Bega Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ 55 feet, 3 double cabins. Emphasis on the natural habitat of Bega Lagoon. **Best buy** ▶ Unlimited diving, 2 divers min., all meals, \$200 per person, per day.

Matagi Princess II

Taveuni, Fiji, (800) 362-8244, (011) 679-880660, fax (011) 679-880661, e-mail: matagiprincess@juno.com, internet: www.matprincess.com. **Dives** ▶ Somo Somo Straits, Ringold Islands, Motui, Exploring Isles, Wakaya, Namena. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85-foot boat, 6 deluxe staterooms, 12 passengers max. Personal service, departs Matagi/Taveuni area. **Booking offices** ▶ International Diving Expeditions, Inter-Ocean Tours, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, Poseidon Venture Tours, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, See & Sea Travel, Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, all meals, nonalcoholic drinks, 33 dives, \$2,065.

Nai'a Cruises Fiji

Box 3179, Lami, Fiji Islands, (011) 679-450-382, fax (011) 679-450-566, e-mail: naia@is.com.fj, internet: www.naiia.com.fiji. **Dives** ▶ Variety of sites around Fiji. **What sets them apart** ▶ 120-foot vessel with 9 cabins. Experienced crew. **Booking offices** ▶ International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$2,305; 10 days, \$3,295.

Sere-Ni-Wai

PO Box 3256, Lami, Fiji, (011) 679-361171, fax (011) 679-361137, e-mail: sere@is.com.fj. **Dives** ▶ All of Fiji. **What sets them apart** ▶ 101-foot custom-built boat, 5 double cabins, 10 passengers. Customized itineraries. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Landfall Productions, Live/Dive Pacific.

GALAPAGOS

Galapagos Aggressor I

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ The Galapagos, including Cousins Rock, Punta Frei and Cabo Marshall, Wolf and Darwin Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85 feet, 7 cabins. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$2,345 (1997), \$2,445 (1998); 11-day humpback and whale shark charters, snorkel with humpbacks in coastal Ecuador, dive with whale sharks of Galapagos, \$3,850.

Galapagos Aggressor II

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ The Galapagos, including Bajo de Gardner, Manzanillo, Devil's Crown, Rabidas Pinnacle and Cousins Rock. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85 feet, 7 cabins. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$2,345 (1997), \$2,445 (1998); 11-day humpback and whale shark charters, snorkel with humpbacks in coastal Ecuador, dive with whale sharks of Galapagos, \$3,850.

Lammer Law

Box 4065, St. Thomas, USVI, (800) 648-3393, (809) 494-2490, fax (809) 494-5774 e-mail: cuanlaw@caribsurf.com. **Dives** ▶ Galapagos, including Wolf and Darwin Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 95- by 42-foot sailing/motor trimaran, 9 cabins, each 110 square feet with private bath. All cabins twin or double bed (no bunks). **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions Dive & Adventure Travel, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages may vary. 8 days, everything included except alcoholic beverages, \$2,030.

M/S Sea Cloud

18380 Avenida Caleta #201, Murrieta, CA 92562, (800) 544-3483, (909) 698-3189, fax (909) 698-3289, e-mail: ide@love2travel.com, internet: love2travel.com. **Dives** ▶ Galapagos Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85-foot motor sailer, 4 staterooms, 8 divers max. 2 dive Zodiacs. Guarantee sailing

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7254 Fir Rd., PO Box 391, Ambler, PA 19002, (800) 223-3845, (215) 641-1624, fax (215) 641-1746, e-mail: valef@ix.netcom.com. **Dives** ▶ Greece. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 yachts, one with 10 staterooms, one with 14.

HAWAII

Kona Aggressor II

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Various sites throughout the Hawaiian Islands, night diving at Manta Ray Village. **What sets them apart** ▶ 80-foot by 30-foot vessel, 5 staterooms, 10 passengers max. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, handicapped accessible, private heads and showers in staterooms, E-6 processing, hot tub, nitrox, rebreathers. **Best buy** ▶ \$1,695 (until June 28), \$1,795 (after June 28).

INDONESIA

Pindito

Sorong, Irian Jaya, Indonesia, (800) 566-2585, (415) 731-2560, fax (415) 731-2579, e-mail: maluku@maluku.com, internet: www.maluku.com. **Dives** ▶ Irian Jaya. **What sets them apart** ▶ 125-foot ketch, 8 double cabins with air-conditioning and private bath, 10 scheduled departures per year. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Maluku Adventures, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 12 days, 11 nights, all meals, 3 dives/day, transfers, \$2,900 per person.

MALAYSIA

Asian Overland Services

Selangor, Malaysia, (011) 603-452-9100, fax (011) 603-292-

5209, e-mail: aos@aostt.pn.my **Dives** ▶ Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on safety. **Best buy** ▶ Trimaran live-aboard charter, 3 divers minimum, 10 divers max., all meals, diving, \$1,698 per day.

MALDIVES

Manthiri

2nd Floor, Sunny Coast, Shaheed Ali Higon, PO Box 20179, Male, 20-01 Maldives, (011) 960-325-634, fax (011) 960-325-633, e-mail: seansee@dhivehinet.net.mv. **Dives** ▶ North and South Male Atolls, Ari Atoll, Faadhippolhu Atoll, Felidhoo Atoll, Mulaku Atoll, Addoo Atoll. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85 feet, 6 cabins. Deluxe accommodations, air-conditioning throughout, large living area, new custom dhoni available Nov. '97. **Booking offices** ▶ Landfall Productions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 9 days, \$2,250.

MALPELO ISLAND, COLOMBIA

Inzan Tiger

(800) DIV-XPRT, (415) 434-3400, fax (415) 434-3409 **Dives** ▶ Malpelo Island. **What sets them apart** ▶ 60-foot vessel, 2 suites, 4 passengers max. 3 private double cabins, 4-6 divers max. **Booking office** ▶ See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 10-day cruise, \$3,495 per person.

MEXICO

Don Jose

La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico, (800) 843-6967, (619) 581-3311, fax (619) 581-6542, e-mail: travel@bajaex.com, internet: www.bajaex.com. **Dives** ▶ Sea of Cortez, La Paz, Baja California. **What sets them apart** ▶ 80-foot boat, 7 cabins. Longest operating diving service in La Paz, experienced crew, works with film crews, professionals and tourists. **Best buy** ▶ 8-day itinerary, 5.5 days diving, all meals, beer, soft drinks onboard, last night in hotel, transfers, \$1,295 per person, dbl. occ. **Solmar V**

Avenida Solmar #1, Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico 23410, (800) 344-3349, (310) 459-9861, fax (310) 454-1686, e-mail: caboresort@aol.com, internet: www.solmar.com. **Dives** ▶ Sea of Cortez and Socorro Islands, including San Benedicto, Roca Partida and Clarion. **What sets them apart** ▶ 112 feet, 12 cabins. Only live-aboard in Cabo, private shower/bath in every stateroom. **Booking offices** ▶ Cabo Resort Reservations (800-344-3349), Landfall Productions, Poseidon Venture Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 4 nights, 5 days in Sea of Cortez, \$995 per person; 7 nights, 8 days in Sea of Cortez, \$1,600 per person; 8 nights, 9 days in Socorro Islands, \$2,100 per person.

PALAU

Palau Aggressor II

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Various sites throughout Palau, including Jellyfish Lake, Blue Corner and other popular locations. **What sets them apart** ▶ 105-foot by 30-foot vessel, 16 passengers max. New boat, emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, 8 staterooms each w/private head and shower, queen and single bed, individual climate control, E-6 processing, nitrox, rebreathers. **Best buy** ▶ Sunday to Sunday cruise, 5.5 days diving, transfers, \$200 discount for nondivers and consecutive charters, \$1,895 (through June 29), \$2,095 (after June 29).

Peter Hughes/Sun Dancer II

6851 Yumuri St. Coral Gables, FL 33146, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Various sites in Palau. **What sets them apart** ▶ 138-foot vessel with 10 cabins, 20 passengers max. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

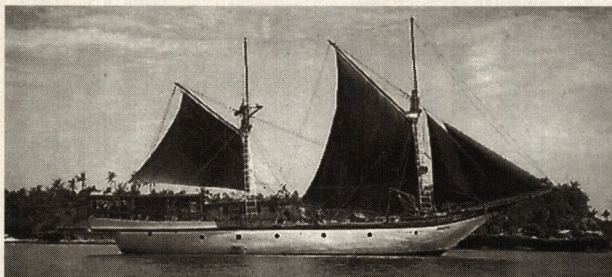
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CIRCLE NO. 131 ON READER SERVICE CARD

MIKE-BALL, (011) 6177-723022, fax (011) 6177-212152, e-mail: mikeball@t140.aone.net.au, internet: www.mikeball.com. **Dives** ▶ Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. **What sets them apart** ▶ Mix of wreck, wall, shark and exotic creature dives. **Booking offices** ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions (see number above), or call your dive travel specialist. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Paradise Sport

252 Walker St., Townsville, Queensland, Australia, (888) MIKE-BALL, (011) 6177-723022, fax (011) 6177-212152, e-mail: mikeball@t140.aone.net.au, internet: www.mikeball.com. **Dives** ▶ Milne Bay Province and Kavieng, Papua New Guinea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 100-foot vessel, 11 cabins. Will be launched November, 1997, cruises begin January, 1998. **Booking offices** ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions (see number above), or call your dive travel specialist. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Peter Hughes/FeBrina

6851 Yumuri St., Coral Gables, FL 33146, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Papua New Guinea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 72 feet, 7 cabins, 14 passengers max. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Peter Hughes/Star Dancer

6851 Yumuri St., Coral Gables, FL 33146, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Papua New Guinea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 120-foot vessel, 8 cabins, 16 passengers max. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

SEYCHELLES

Fantasea Cruises

2019 Westgate Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025, (800) 390-DIVE, (310) 571-7155, fax (310) 571-7154, e-mail: fantasea@ibm.com, internet: www.fantasea.com. **Dives** ▶ Aldabra Atoll, Seychelles and Inner Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ Only live-aboard operating in Aldabra Atoll, World Heritage Site. **Booking office** ▶ See & Sea Travel. **Best buy** ▶ From \$300 per person, per night.

Underwater Centre Cruises

PO Box 384, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles, (011) 00-248-344223, fax (011) 00-248-344223, e-mail: divesey@seychelles.net, internet: www.seychelles.net/divesey. **Dives** ▶ Inner islands, including Mahe, Desroches, St. Joseph, Diarros, Alphonse; outer islands including Aldabra, Astove, Cosmoledo. **What sets them apart** ▶ 80 feet, 3 cabins, 6 divers. Small groups, 14-day programs. **Booking office** ▶ Seychelles Tourist Office (212-687-9766). **Best buy** ▶ 14 nights, from \$4,935, excluding airfare.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Blue Lagoon Cruises S.I. Ltd.

Honiara, Solomon Islands, (800) 576-7327, (011) 677-39129, fax (011) 677-25300, e-mail: solsea@welkam.solomon.com.sb, internet: www.netilus.com/solomonsea. **Dives** ▶ Solomon Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 27 years experience. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Island Dreams, Landfall Productions, South Seas Adventures (800-576-7327), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, 29 possible dives, all meals and snacks, tanks and weights, transfers, optional shore excursion, tax, \$1,995 per person.

MV Bilikiki

PO Box 5693, Victoria, BC V8R 6S4 Canada, (800) 663-5363, (250) 383-7253, fax (250) 383-6598, e-mail: bilikiki@horizon.bc.ca, internet: www.bilikiki.com. **Dives** ▶ Russell and Florida islands, Marovo Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ 130-foot live-aboard with 10 cabins, dive tender system. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Bilikiki Cruises (see number above), Dive Discovery, Landfall Productions, Poseidon Venture Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventure Tours. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, \$2,072.

MV Spirit of Solomons

PO Box 5693, Victoria, BC V8R 6S4 Canada, (800) 663-5363, (250) 383-7253, fax (250) 383-6598, e-mail: bilikiki@horizon.bc.ca, internet: www.bilikiki.com. **Dives** ▶ Russell and Florida islands, Marovo Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ A 130-foot vessel with 13 cabins, diving in biologically diverse waters, unique tender pick-up system. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Bilikiki Cruises (see number above), Dive Discovery, Poseidon Venture Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, \$1,575.

MV Solomon Sea

Honiara, Solomon Islands, (800) 976-5732, (011) 677-39129, fax (011) 677-25300, e-mail: solsea@welkam.solomon.com.sb, internet: www.netilus.com/solomonsea. **Dives** ▶ Solomon Islands, including Morovo Lagoon. **What sets them apart** ▶ 80-foot boat, 5 cabins. Caters to small groups. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, International Diving Expeditions, Island Dreams, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, South Seas Adventures (800-576-7327), Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

TEXAS

MV Fling & MV Spree

1203 N. Ave. J, Freeport, TX 77541, (409) 233-4445, fax (409) 233-0040 e-mail: rinn@republic.net, internet: rinn.scuba.master.com. **Dives** ▶ Flower Gardens NMS including Stetson Bank, oil rigs. **What sets them apart** ▶ 2 100-foot air-conditioned live-aboards carry 34 passengers on 2- and 3-day trips 110 miles offshore. **Best buy** ▶ Consult web site.

THAILAND

Colona II

PO Box 22, Patong Beach, Phuket, Thailand 83150, (011) 6676-340088, fax (011) 6676-340309, e-mail: info@fantasea.net, internet: www.fantasea.net. **Dives** ▶ Andaman Sea, Phuket, Similan Islands, Richelieu Rock. **What sets them apart** ▶ 60 feet, 3 cabins, 6 passengers. Experienced crew, cater to small groups. **Booking office** ▶ Landfall Productions. **Best buy** ▶ 6 days, 7 nights, \$1,195; 5 days, 6 nights, \$950.

Crescent

113/12 Song Roi Pee Rd., Patong, Phuket, Thailand, (011) 6676-340406, fax (011) 6676-340586, e-mail: seadivers@phuket.com, internet: seadivers.com. **Dives** ▶ Similan Islands, Surin Islands and Richelieu Rocks, Racha Yai, Racha Noi and Shark Point, Mergui Archipelago (Burma), Sangihe Talaud Archipelago, northern Sulawesi (Indonesia). **What sets them apart** ▶ 60-foot ketch with 3 double cabins and 4 berth cabins, all with air-conditioning. Emphasis on safety, caters to small groups of 8 to 10. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Bolder Adventures, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days/8 nights, 3 dives daily at Similan Islands and Surin, accommodations, meals, guide, \$1,188 per person.

Fantasea Divers

Thailand, (011) 6676-340088, fax (011) 6676-340309, e-mail: fantasea@phuket.com, internet: www.padi.com/fantasea.htm. **Dives** ▶ Andaman Sea, Mergui Archipelago and Similan Islands. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Landfall Productions, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ Packages may vary. Call for rates.

Gaea & Wanderlust

113/12 Song Roi Pee Rd., Patong, Phuket, Thailand, (011) 6676-340406, fax (011) 6676-340586, e-mail: seadiver@loxin.co.th. **Dives** ▶ Similan Islands, Surin Islands and Richelieu Rocks, Racha Yai, Racha Noi and Shark Point, Mergui Archipelago (Burma). **What sets them apart** ▶ Two 50-foot trimarans with 3 double cabins and 2 single cabins. Emphasis on safety, caters to small groups of 8 to 10. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, Bolder Adventures, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, 8 nights, 3 dives daily at Similan Islands and Surin, all food and accommodations, tanks and weights, divemaster, \$1,188 per person.

MV Andaman Seafarer/ PIDC Divers Co. Ltd.

1/10 Viset Rd. (Chalong Bay), Phuket 83130, Thailand, (011) 6676-2806445, fax (011) 6676-381219. **Dives** ▶ Similan, Surin and Richelieu Rocks, Hin Daeng, Hin Muang. **What sets them apart** ▶ 5-day, 6-night cruises to Similan, Surin and Richelieu Rocks or to Hin Daeng and Hin Muang.

MV Fantasea

PO Box 22, Patong Beach, Phuket, Thailand 83150, (011) 6676-340088, fax (011) 6676-340309, e-mail: info@fantasea.net, internet: www.fantasea.net. **Dives** ▶ Phuket, Thailand, Similan Islands, Richelieu Rock, Hin Daeng, Andaman Sea. **What sets them apart** ▶ 100-foot vessel, 7 cabins, 15 passengers. Video/photo pro, E-6 processing. **Booking offices** ▶ Adventure Express, International Diving Expeditions, Reef & Rainforest Worldwide Adventure Travel, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 9 days, 10 nights, \$2,230; 6 days, 7 nights, \$1,565.

Siam Dive 'N Sail/MV Sai Mai

121/9 Patak Rd., MV 4, Karon, 83100 Phuket, Thailand,

(011) 6676-330967, fax (011) 6676-396413, e-mail: info@siamdivers.com, internet: www.siamdivers.com. **Dives** ▶ Similan Islands, Hin Daeng, Surin, Richelieu Rock, Myanmar (Burma), Andaman Islands. **Booking offices** ▶ Poseidon Venture Tours, Reef & Rainforest, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days on live-aboard, 7 days diving, 7 nights, \$1,849.

TURKS & CAICOS

Peter Hughes/Sea Dancer

6851 Yumuri St. Coral Gables, FL 33146, (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475, e-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com, internet: www.peterhughes.com. **Dives** ▶ Throughout the Turks & Caicos Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 110-foot vessel with 9 staterooms, 18 passengers max. **Best buy** ▶ Packages vary. Call for rates.

Turks & Caicos Aggressor

PO Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381, (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628, fax (504) 384-0817, e-mail: divboat@aol.com, internet: www.aggressor.com. **Dives** ▶ Sites throughout the Turks & Caicos, Silva Banks during whale charters. **What sets them apart** ▶ 100 feet, 7 cabins. Emphasis on service, consistency throughout Aggressor Fleet, whale charters Feb. through March, nurse shark excursions June, July and August. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$1,495.

US VIRGIN ISLANDS

Yacht TriWorld

5200 Long Bay Rd., St. Thomas, USVI, (809) 771-0164, fax (809) 776-7631, e-mail: triworld@admirals.com, internet: www.admirals.com/triworld. **Dives** ▶ US Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands. **What sets them apart** ▶ 58-foot trimaran, 3 double cabins with private heads and showers. Personal service, no set itinerary. **Best buy** ▶ 7 nights, all-inclusive (meals, drinks, diving), rates based on 6-person occupancy, \$1,300.

VENEZUELA

Antares III

(011) 5895-617746. **Dives** ▶ Los Roques archipelago. **What sets them apart** ▶ 85 feet, 6 cabins. Deluxe accommodations. **Booking offices** ▶ Dive Tours, See & Sea Travel, Tropical Adventures Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 7 days, \$1,375.

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Adventure Express

(800) 443-0799, (415) 442-0799, fax (415) 442-0289. **Destinations** ▶ Alaska, Andaman Islands, Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Guam, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Marianas Islands, Marquesas, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Puerto Rico, Reunion, Saba, St. Barthelmy, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Yap.

Air Promotion Systems

(800) 677-4277, (310) 670-7302, fax (310) 338-0708, e-mail: sopac@traps.com, internet: www.pacificislands.com. **Destinations** ▶ Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

Aqua Fauna Safaris

(800) 348-3436, (916) 791-5492, fax (916) 783-2995, e-mail: aquafau@naaol.com. **Destinations** ▶ Andaman Islands, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Mauritius, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Reunion, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Tonga, Truk, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Yap.

Aqua Red

(800) 730-4250, fax (914) 633-8780, e-mail: Inissman@aol.com. **Destinations** ▶ Belize, Bonaire, British Columbia, Cayman Islands, Cozumel, French Polynesia, Honduras, Saba, Truk; various live-aboards.

Aqua-Trek Dive Travel

(800) 541-4334, (415) 398-8990, fax (415) 398-0479, e-mail: info@aquatrek.com, internet: www.aquatrek.com. **Destination** ▶ Fiji.

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Destinations ▶ Australia, Galapagos, Papua New Guinea, Thailand.

Argo World Travel

(800) 651-0377, (310) 377-0377, fax (310) 377-0286, e-mail: info@argo.worldtravel.com, internet: www.argo.worldtravel.com.

Destinations ▶ Australia, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cocos Islands, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Honduras, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, Saba, St. Lucia, Seychelles, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Yap, Yucatan.

Armadillo Tours International (ATI)

(800) ATI-5678, (512) 328-2232, fax (512) 328-7521, e-mail: info@armadillotours.com. **Destinations** ▶ Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua.

Bahamas Travel Network

(800) 513-5535, (954) 467-1133, fax (954) 467-7544, e-mail: lori@estreet.net. **Destination** ▶ Bahamas.

Bahia Tours, Inc.

(800) 443-0717, (305) 666-1997, fax (305) 666-2292, e-mail: bahia@gate.net, internet: www.aventuras.com/bahia-tours. **Destinations** ▶ Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama.

Baja Hotel Reservations

(800) 347-2252, (714) 450-9000, fax (714) 450-9010, e-mail: bajahotels@aol.com, internet: www.bajahotels.com. **Destination** ▶ Baja California.

Barbachano Tours

(800) 327-2254, (305) 670-9691, fax (305) 670-9695, e-mail: ldd@barbachano.com, internet: www.barchachano.com. **Destinations** ▶ Belize, Bay Islands, Cozumel, Honduras, Yucatan.

Belize Resorts/JC Resorts

(800) 881-3459, (305) 595-3459, fax (305) 595-2003. **Destinations** ▶ Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras.

Blue Lagoon Adventures, Inc.

(800) 216-2997, fax (941) 792-4164, e-mail: 71240.510@compuserve.com, internet: www.188ecodive.com. **Destinations** ▶ Aruba, Bahamas, Bay Islands, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Dominica, Honduras, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands.

Bolder Adventures, Inc./Asia Transpacific Journeys

(800) 642-2742, (303) 443-6789, fax (303) 443-7078, e-mail: dive@southeastasia.com, internet: www.southeastasia.com. **Destinations** ▶ Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand.

Broadreach

(919) 833-1979, fax (919) 833-2129, internet: www.gobroadreach.com. **Destinations** ▶ Live-aboard trips for teens including marine biology field study and wilderness programs to the Caribbean, Costa Rica, Galapagos and the Red Sea.

BZ Travel Services

(800) 382-7776, (713) 337-3758, fax (713) 337-1168, e-mail: bztravel@compassnet.com, internet: www.compassnet.com/bztravel. **Destination** ▶ Belize.

Caradonna Caribbean Tours

(800) 328-2288, (407) 774-9000, fax (407) 682-6000, e-mail: caradonna@aol.com, internet: www.travelfile.com/. **Destinations** ▶ Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Bequia, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Guadeloupe, Honduras, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Montserrat, Palau, Saba, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Martin, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Venezuela, Yucatan.

Caribbean Adventures Dive Travel

(800) 934-DIVE, (954) 433-DIVE, fax (954) 434-4282, e-mail: margo@worlddive.com, internet: www.worlddive.com. **Destinations** ▶ Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Galapagos, Honduras, Malpelo Island, Panama, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, Turks & Caicos; various live-aboards.

Caribbean Dive Tours

(800) 786-3483, (770) 578-8028, fax (770) 565-0129. **Destinations** ▶ Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Baja California, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, BVI's, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Maldives, Mexico, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Puerto Rico, Red Sea, Saba, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk,

Turks & Caicos, USVs, Venezuela, Yap, Yucatan.

Caribbean Info Office

(800) 621-1270, (847) 699-7570, fax (847) 699-7583, e-mail: mermaid@caribbeans.com, internet: www.caribbeans.com. **Destinations** ► Antigua, Barbados, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Nevis, St. Barth, St. Kitts, St. Martin, St. Vincent, US Virgin Islands.

Cen Pac

(800) U-GO-DIVE, (714) 440-3717, fax (714) 851-3111, e-mail: cpde@aol.com, internet: cenpacdive.com. **Destinations** ► Belize, Bikini, California, Cayman Islands, Channel Islands, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Guam, Honduras, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Pohnpei, Saba, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk, Yap.

Continental Micronesia/ Island Adventures

(800) 945-9955, (310) 322-8100, fax (310) 322-5111, e-mail: info@destmic.com, internet: www.destmic.com. **Destinations** ► Central Pacific, Hawaii, South Pacific, Western Pacific.

Continental World of Diving

(800) GO-DIVING, (310) 322-1944, fax (310) 322-5111 **Destinations** ► Belize, Cayman Islands, Central Pacific, Costa Rica, Hawaii, Honduras, Mexico, South Pacific, Western Pacific.

DFW Tours

(800) 527-2589, (972) 980-4540, fax (972) 386-3802, e-mail: dfw tours@onramp.net. **Destinations** ► Anguilla, Antigua, Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Cancun, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Hawaii, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Martin, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands.

Dive Brazil

(888) 627-2945, (303) 331-6167, fax (303) 331-6169, e-mail: divebrazil@watersedgetravel.com. **Destination** ► Brazil.

Dive Discovery Travel

(800) 886-7321, (415) 256-8890, fax (415) 258-9115, e-mail: divediscovery@compuserve.com, internet: www.divediscovery.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Borneo, Cocos Island, Fiji, Galapagos, Indian Ocean, Indonesia, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Red Sea, Seychelles, Socorro Island, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Vanuatu, Venezuela.

Dive Saba Travel

(800) 883-SABA, (713) 467-8835, fax (713) 461-6044, e-mail: divesaba@aol.com, internet: www.ghgcorp.com/divesaba. **Destinations** ► Dominica, Saba, St. Maarten, Statia.

Dive Statia Travel

(800) 883-7222, (713) 467-8835, fax (713) 461-6044, e-mail: divesaba@aol.com, internet: www.ghgcorp.com/divesaba. **Destinations** ► Dominica, Saba, St. Maarten, Statia.

Dive Tours

(800) 433-0885, (713) 680-2090, fax (713) 680-2306, e-mail: dive tours@aol.com, internet: www.dsi-divetours.com. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Baja California, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Honduras, Venezuela, Yucatan; various live-aboards.

Dolphin Divers

(312) 541-0420, fax (312) 541-8991, e-mail: dolphin@aol.com. **Destinations** ► Several; call for details.

Dreamscape Dive Tours

(800) 348-3756, (954) 572-2850, fax (954) 572-2975, e-mail: info@dreamscape-dive.com, internet: www.dreamscape-dive.com. **Destinations** ► Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Cozumel, Dominica, Florida Keys, Hawaii, Honduras, Jamaica, Saba, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Western Australia; various live-aboards.

Eco-Adventures

(800) 949-3483, (808) 329-7116, fax (808) 329-7091, e-mail: eco dive@ilhawaii.net, internet: www.travebase.com/activities/scuba/eco-adventures/ **Destinations** ► Australia, Borneo, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Indonesia, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pohnpei, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Yap.

e.t.a.-Experience the Adventure

(800) 815-5019, (305) 267-6644, fax (305) 261-6648 **Destinations** ► Amazon, Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Caribbean, Cayman Islands, Chile, Costa Rica, Cocos Island, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Galapagos, Honduras, Jamaica, Pacific, Panama, Venezuela.

Frontiers

(800) 245-1950, (412) 935-1577, fax (412) 935-5388 **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Belize, Kiribati, Venezuela.

Ghazala U.S.A., Inc.

(888) REDSEA-1, (619) 459-5949, fax (619) 459-2449, e-mail: ghazala@ix.netcom.com. **Destination** ► Red Sea.

Great Southern Island Adventures

(800) 748-8733, (601) 353-7547, fax (601) 353-7559, e-mail: grtatvtr@teclink.net. **Destinations** ► Bonaire, Grand Cayman.

Inter-Ocean Tours

(800) 345-7159, (510) 638-3448, fax (510) 638-1741, e-mail: interocean@aol.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, California, Cayman Islands, Channel Islands, Cocos Island, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Grenada, Guam, Hawaii, Honduras, Israel, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pohnpei, Saba, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Yap, Yucatan.

International Diving Expeditions

(800) 544-DIVE, (909) 698-3189, fax (909) 698-3289 e-mail: ide@love2travel.com. **Destinations** ► Andaman Islands, Australia, Belize, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Guam, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saba, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Thailand, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Yap.

Into the Blue

(800) 6-GET-WET, (610) 275-1605, fax (610) 275-4842, e-mail: cvdt@aol.com, internet: www.intothetheblue.com. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Brac, Cozumel, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos.

Island Adventures

(800) 900-7657, (310) 322-8100, fax (310) 322-5111 **Destinations** ► Australia, Belize, Cayman Islands, Central Pacific, Costa Rica, Fiji, Hawaii, Honduras, Mexico, South Pacific, Western Pacific.

Island Dreams Travel

(800) 346-6116, (713) 973-9300, fax (713) 973-8585, e-mail: info@islanddream.com, internet: www.islanddream.com. **Destinations** ► Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Belize, Honduras, Costa Rica,

Maldives, Cozumel,

Yucatan, Australia, Fiji,

Galapagos, Indonesia,

Malaysia, Solomon

Islands, Vanuatu.

Islands in the Sun

(800) 828-6877, (310) 536-

0051, fax (310) 536-6266

Destinations ► Australia,

French Polynesia, New

Zealand.

K J Dive

Adventures

(800) 450-2084, (218) 722-2084, fax (218) 722-7672, e-mail: kjdive@uslink.com.

Destinations ► Aruba,

Bermuda, Bonaire, Cay-

man Islands, Curacao,

Galapagos, Turks &

Caicos.

Landfall

Productions

(800) 525-3833, (510) 794-

1599, fax (510) 794-1617,

e-mail: landfall@aol.com,

internet: ecotravel.com

/landfall. **Destinations** ►

Baja California, Belize,

Bequia, British Virgin

Islands, Bonaire, Cayman

Islands, Cocos Islands,

Costa Rica, Cozumel,

Curaçao, Dominica, Fiji,

Galapagos, Hawaii, Hon-

duras, Maldives, Mexico,

Palau, Papua New Guinea,

Red Sea, St. Kitts and

Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vin-

cent, Solomon Islands,

Thailand, Truk, Turks &

Caicos.

Mad Dog

Expeditions

(800) 4-MAD-DOG, (212)

744-6763, fax (212) 744-6568 e-mail: info@mad-dog.net, internet: www.mad-dog.net. **Destinations** ► Amazon, Bikini, Canadian Arctic, Florida Springs, Grenada, Scotland, South Africa, Yucatan.

Maduro Dive Fanta-Seas

(800) 327-6709, (305) 438-4222, fax (305) 438-4220, e-mail: maduro@netpoint.net, internet: www.empg.com/maduro. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Curaçao, Dominica, Honduras, Palau, Red Sea, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, South Africa, Tobago, Turks & Caicos.

Magnum Belize

(800) 447-2931, (218) 847-3012, fax (218) 847-0334, e-mail: magnum@tekstar.com, internet: www.magnumbelize.com. **Destination** ► Belize.

Maluku Adventures

(800) 566-2585, (415) 731-2560, fax (415) 731-2579, e-mail: maluku@maluku.com, internet: www.maluku.com **Destinations** ► Andaman Islands, Borneo, Brazil, Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Seychelles, South Africa, South Pacific, Thailand, Vietnam.

Maya Tours

(800) 392-6292, (561) 477-4848, fax (561) 477-4879, e-mail: info@mayatour.com, internet: mayatour.com **Destinations** ► Aruba, Bahamas, Bay Island, Belize, Bonaire, Costa Rica, Curaçao, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saba.

Moore Tours

(800) 527-6366, (972) 907-0915, fax (972) 480-8634 **Destination** ► Grand Cayman.

Morris Accent on Travel

(800) 288-8648, (503) 645-7323, fax (503) 690-9308 **Destination** ► Belize.

MTM Tours

(800) 635-8483, (281) 448-9258, fax (281) 448-0417 **Destinations** ► Baja, Cozumel, Sea of Cortez, Southern California, Yucatan.

Nabila Tours and Cruises

(800) 443-6453, (415) 979-0160, fax (415) 979-0163 **Destinations** ►

(Continued on page 143)

Summer Specials

GRAND CAYMAN \$695 (Treasure Island Beach Resort, Treasure Island Divers - breakfast)

CAYMAN BRAC \$969 (Brac Reef Beach Resort - all meals)

VENEZUELA \$795 (Dive Inn Morrocoy, Posada Baliju - all meals)

COSTA RICA \$699 (La Costa Hotel, Diving Safaris - breakfast)

DOMINICA \$850 (Garraway Hotel, Dominica - breakfast)

BONAIRE \$625 (Sunset Beach, Dive Inn Bonaire - breakfast)

BAHAMAS \$755 (Green Turtle Club, Brandon's Dive - breakfast)

JAMAICA \$889 (Eaton Hall, Jamaqua Dive Center - all-inclusive)

ECUADOR \$999 (Machalilla, whale watching - all meals)

GALAPAGOS \$1600 (Sail Boat, Catamaran, Nixe Cruises - all meals)

BELIZE \$650 (Coconuts Hotel, Amigos del Mar, breakfast)

BAY ISLANDS \$725 (Boyan Bay Club - all meals)

Packages include: **7** night hotel accommodations,
6 to 18 tank boat dives, specified meals.

Discounted airfare available from all US and Canadian
major gateways. Price per person, double occupancy.



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Aggressor Fleet

Diving the Globe with Aggressor Fleet

In the 1997 *Rodale's Scuba Diving* Readers' Choice Awards, divers hailed the *Palau Aggressor II* as the number one live-aboard in the world. Three other Aggressor boats—*Cayman*, *Galapagos* and *Belize*—scored in the top 10. Readers rated the crew of the *Bay Islands Aggressor III* the number one live-aboard team on earth. What's behind the popularity of Aggressor dive cruises?

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

OF THE FREQUENT KIND ► The Aggressor Fleet newsletter is filled with stories of up-close-and-personals with the world's most impressive sea creatures:

► Kona, Hawaii—During night diving with Pacific mantas, guests observe the silent giants executing precision Stealth wing-overs as they feed.

► Palau—Divers sight rare beauties: leaf fish, harlequin ghost pipefish and a juvenile batfish.

► Truk—Sharks cruise up to hail divers off Paradise Island.

► Cocos Island—On one trip, the ship's log cites encounters with false killer whales, Galapagos sharks, a school of Mobula rays, mating eagle rays, dolphins and, of course, hammerheads.

► Bay Islands—In January, guests snorkel with pilot whales, Whale Sharks and dolphins spotted off Roatan.

► Turks and Caicos—At French Cay, mating nurse sharks provide a circus of shallow-water excitement.

► Belize—Honey, Ozzy, Harriet and five dolphins entertain divers with mating-season acrobatics. Sightings: big turtles and pilot whales.

► Galapagos—Aggressor's "Whale of an Adventure" is the ticket for divers who've yearned to get close to large cetaceans. Start with a four-day trip to Plata Island—off mainland Ecuador—for snorkeling with the humpbacks that congregate there from June to September. Then head to the Galapagos for six days of diving with whale sharks, hammerheads, sea lions and penguins.



Dive five times a day or take a break and relax in the spacious salon—it's your choice as a guest on one of Aggressor's 12 amenity-filled live-aboards. Bottom right: Several Aggressor boats now offer rebreather instruction and rentals.



EXPANSION OF THE FLEET

Aggressor Fleet is proud to announce the addition of Fiji to its already-long list of the world's best dive destinations. Dive the beautiful, crystal-clear waters surrounding Fiji from either the newest Aggressor live-aboard, the *Sere-Ni-Wai*, or the *Fijij Aggressor* which will be launching this summer.

TECHNICAL DIVERS WELCOME

During an Aggressor cruise, divers have a full week to appreciate the advantages of nitrox and rebreathers. With enriched air, divers can add measures of safety and comfort to their bottom times. With rebreathers,



KIKI MOSELY

underwater photographers can approach skittish fish that are frightened by air streams from regulators.

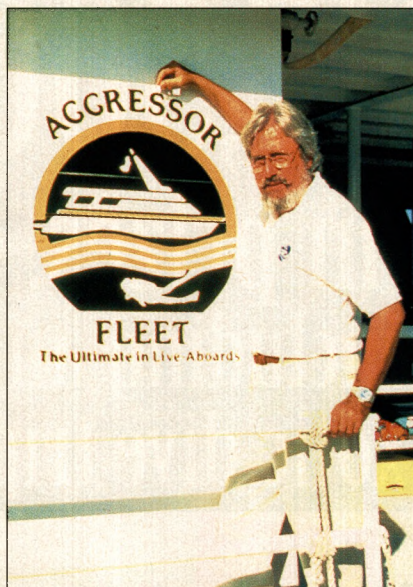
Some divers find it difficult to work nitrox and rebreather training into busy lives at home. Aggressor has a solution: get certified during the first days of your dive cruise. On many Aggressor vessels, divers can complete the TDI (Technical Diving International) Nitrox Course (\$150) or the TDI Rebreather Course (\$300). Save \$100 on the combination nitrox and rebreather course (\$350). If you're already nitrox-certified, nitrox air fills run \$7 per tank, or \$100 for "Nitrox Unlimited" for a week of EAN tanks. If you're rebreather-certified, you can rent a unit for \$25 per dive.

HANDICAPPED DIVERS WELCOME ► The Aggressor Fleet has just made some major changes to accommodate disabled divers. The *Kona Aggressor II* now features doors widened for wheelchair-access, three rooms that meet standards for accommodating handicapped divers, and a lift that provides access to the boat's decks.

The new *Fiji Aggressor* is scheduled for her maiden voyage in mid-summer '97. While on the drawing boards, the designers made the entire vessel accessible to divers with disabilities. All cabins are designed for use by divers in wheel chairs, and the *Fiji Aggressor* features an eleva-

tor for access to boat decks.

On board both boats are instructors with Handicapped Instructor and Dive Buddy certifications. The *Kona Aggressor II* and the *Fiji Aggressor* have both earned the top rating—five-stars—from the Handicapped Scuba Association.



DIVE INTO ADVENTURE ► Eager-to-learn divers will appreciate the Aggressor Fleet's "l'Aventure Cousteau" program. In 1997 and 1998, Jean-Michel Cousteau and his team of notables will lead expeditions to the Turks and Caicos Islands, Fiji, the Cayman Islands, Coco Island, Kona, Hawaii, the Bay Islands, the Galapagos, Palau and Belize.

The Kona Aggressor II is the first five-star, handicapped accessible live-aboard — soon to be joined by the Fiji Aggressor.



HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES ► If you're not heir-apparent to David Doubilet, perhaps you could stand some polish on your underwater photography and video skills. Throughout '97 and '98, Stan Waterman and Jim Church are offering courses and seminars on Aggressor live-aboards. Enter the winning shot in the 1997 Aggressor Photo Contest, and you score a free trip and U.S. Divers equipment.

SCORE ON THE REBOUND ► Cruise veterans are eligible for membership in the "Aggressor Dive The World Club." They can enter the grand prize drawings for 20 free trips offered annually. Plus, members enjoy a 10% discount on cruise services and 50% off during special Buddy Weeks.

INFORMATION, PLEASE ► A more descriptive title for the new CD-ROM "Passport to the Aggressor Fleet" might be "Everything You Wanted To Know About Aggressor Dive Cruises." At only \$12.99, the compact disc is a good investment. The interactive guide features country and dive site maps, underwater and top-side photos, videos, and details on the boats and itineraries. It also makes a great memento of an Aggressor live-aboard adventure. For more information online, zip to Aggressor's home page on the world wide web: <http://www.aggressor.com>. Divers can also use the web site to order brochures and make reservations.

BOOK IT ► Ask about Aggressor's special savings: \$200 off consecutive charters; \$200 off for non-divers; \$100 off 2nd trip within 1 year; \$200 off 3rd trip within 1 year. For more information, contact Aggressor Fleet Limited, P.O. Box 1470, Morgan City, LA 70381-1470. Telephone: (800) 348-2628 or (504) 385-2628. Fax: (504) 384-0817. E-mail: divboat@aol.com. Web: <http://www.aggressor.com>.

— Text by Rob Curran

WIN:**Regulator:
Scubapro
MK20/G250****WIN:****Dive Computer:
Oceanic
DataTrans****WIN:****Snorkel:
Ocean Master
Dry 2000****INTRODUCING:
RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING****"Gear Up & Go" Giveaway!****Enter to WIN
\$17,500
in prizes,
including an
exotic dive trip!****WIN:****Mask: Ocean
Master
Equalizer Z4 Mask****WIN:****BC:
Zeagle
Ranger****WIN:****Fins:
U.S. Divers
Blades****WIN:****Wetsuit:
Oztex
Diveskins
III 1600****OFFICIAL RULES**

No Purchase Necessary.
To enter, complete and mail your Official Entry Form.
Entries must be received by December 31, 1997. Not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, undelivered or illegible mail. Winner will be determined by January 7, 1998 in a random drawing from eligible entries received.
Winner selection is under the supervision of Rodale Press, Inc. All decisions are final. Taxes are the responsibility of the winner. Chances of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received.
Sweepstakes open to all residents of the United States and Canada (except those residing in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) who are at least 18 years of age. Employees of Rodale Press, JWA Worldwide/Scubapro USA, Zeagle Systems, Oceanic, Ocean Master, Oztex Inc., US Divers, Sea & See Travel Service and members of their families are not eligible. To win a prize, residents of Canada will be required to correctly answer a skill test question. Sweepstakes is subject to all laws and is void where prohibited.
Winner will be obligated to sign and return an Affidavit of Eligibility and Release of Liability within 30 days of notification. In the event of noncompliance, another winner will be selected. Any prize notification returned as undeliverable will result in awarding that prize to an alternate winner. By acceptance of the prize, the winner consents to use their name, photograph or other likenesses for purposes of advertising, trade and promotion on behalf of Rodale Press, Inc., without further compensation, unless prohibited by law.
Winner will win:
1. Scubapro MK20/G250 Regulator
2. Zeagle Ranger BC
3. Oceanic DataTrans Dive Computer
4. Ocean Master Equalizer Z-4 Mask
5. Ocean Master Dry Snorkel 2000
6. U.S. Divers Blades Fins
7. Plane tickets for an 11-day dive adventure to the Coral Sea. Trip includes airfare from a major airport and accommodations for one. Taxes and gratuities are included. Trip will be taken in 1998.
For the name of the winner (available after January 15, 1998), send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Rodale's Scuba Diving, P.O. Box 7578, Red Oak, IA 51591-0578.

PLUS WIN: YOUR ULTIMATE DIVE TRIP!

Join SCUBA DIVING Executive Editor David Taylor and the world-renowned photographer Carl Roessler for an 11-day dive-cruise through the CORAL SEA! You'll dive day and night aboard the *Golden Dawn*, just off the coast of Papua New Guinea, one of the most spectacular diving spots in the world!

**Rodale's
SCUBA DIVING
THE MAGAZINE DIVERS TRUST****Gear Up & Go
Dive Adventure Sweepstakes!****Enter today and subscribe to Rodale's SCUBA DIVING,
the magazine divers trust.****JUST MAIL THE ATTACHED ENTRY CERTIFICATE TODAY
FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!**

Fantasy Island Beach Resort

A Royal Reception on Roatan

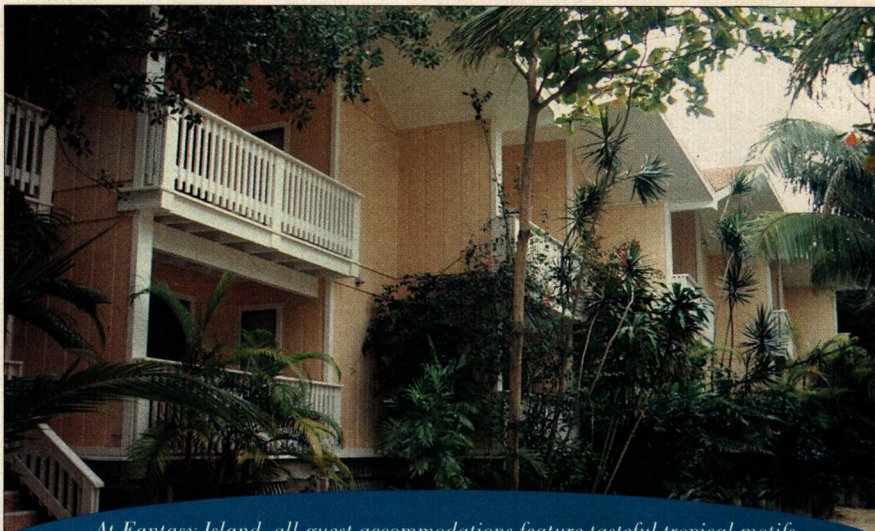
Fantasy Island Beach Resort established the standard in the Bay Islands for modern luxury and amenities. It's the only resort on Roatan with air-conditioned interiors throughout, a delight when you want to beat a retreat from tropical heat.

But the Fantasy Island experience is far more than climate control. The hospitality and service start at the Roatan airport, before you set foot in the resort. Fantasy Island staffs a welcome center at the airport. You're travel-weary, so Fantasy Island greeters help you get through baggage claim, immigration and customs quickly, and then show you to a shuttle transfer to the resort.

During your stay at Fantasy Island, the travel experts are smoothing out the road for your other travel plans and for your trip home. The travel assistance is subtle. You may not notice it as you breeze through your connections coming and going. But behind the scenes—in typical Fantasy Island fashion—your hosts are constantly working to make your stay pleasurable.

UNDERWATER FANTASY ► The scuba center at Fantasy Island is a large, modern facility with six roomy dive boats. Everything a diver needs is conveniently located dockside: boats, dive shop, rentals, rinse bins and wet storage. Guests can expect to make 22 to 24 dives during their stay, including three boat trips daily, night dives and unlimited shore diving. During a typical week, guests enjoy scheduled boat dives off both the south and north coasts of Roatan, a rarity at other resorts. From the resort on Roatan's south shore, a private road crosses the island for a five-minute ride to Fantasy Island's north shore dive base.

In the 1997 *Rodale's Scuba Diving* Readers' Choice Top 100, Roatan scored in the top five in the Caribbean for shore diving. At Fantasy Island, stunning reefs and drop-offs fringe the property, just a short swim from shore. Just ask the dive staff to set you up for



At Fantasy Island, all guest accommodations feature tasteful tropical motifs, air-conditioning, satellite TV, private phone and refrigerator and are located in beautifully landscaped central, hillside, beachside and poolside settings.

a dive from the shore diving gazebo. They'll take care of everything, even carrying your heavy gear.

TOPSIDE DELIGHTS ► During your stay at Fantasy Island, you'll enjoy a week of fine food and beverage. In the 1996 *RSD* Readers' Choice Top 100, Fantasy Island was ranked No. 2 in the world for best food at a resort, thanks to the excellent Palm Restaurant. Now guests can enjoy the acclaimed food, beverage and service non-stop from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Divers appreciate the outdoor Palapa restaurant—open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.—just steps from the dive center and beach. The Palapa features a full menu of food and drink and a refreshing salad bar.

Fantasy Island offers a variety of relaxing après-dive activities. On Saturday afternoons, your assignment is to compare and contrast 15 Caribbean rums over hors d'oeuvres. Tuesday nights, it's the all-you-can-eat-and-drink Shrimp and Crab Boil. Wednesday nights, the boss hosts the Manager's Party with music, free drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Try the cooking and Punta dancing lessons if you want to work your way around a dance floor

and a kitchen like a native. Polish your Español with Spanish lessons. Decompress with a soothing massage right on the beach.

BOOK IT ► All-inclusive packages include diving, double-occupancy accommodations, all meals and free alcoholic beverages Wednesday night. Seven nights are \$675pp until Dec. 15, 1997, \$875 for a beachfront room. Call Fantasy Island at (800) 676-2826 or (813) 353-9511, fax (813) 353-0154 for reservations, air connections and information. Or see the color brochure at <http://www.empg.com/fantasy-island>.

—Text and Photography by Rob Curran



Posada Del Sol

A Paradise for Divers and Anglers



Posada Del Sol is a magnificent 24-room Spanish villa with a restaurant, bar, swimming pool, tennis court, two beaches and a staff of 50 to attend to your every need.

I stand on the dock, watching the dive operation run like a Swiss watch. Grinning broadly, a muscular, fortyish diver with an Army T-shirt and crew-cut steps off a dive boat. Before I can ask why he's so happy, the blond diver exclaims, "Those were two of the best dives I've ever made, and I've been all over the world. Fifteen minutes from the dock." There you have it: a world-traveler's unsolicited endorsement of the diving at Posada Del Sol.

Posada Del Sol is a lush Caribbean hideaway on Guanaja, the tallest and second largest jewel in the Bay Islands of Honduras. The hilly island is as unspoiled as it is picturesque: no cars or roads—just mountain peaks jutting from the green jungle. The resort's centerpiece is the authentic "main house," the Spanish villa that nestles amid coconut palms and exotic tropical plants. A white-sand beach fringes rising hills, the second longest barrier reef in the world, and pristine saltwater flats for fly-fishing.

Anglers appreciate Posada Del Sol. So do laze-on-the-beach guests who hope to do no more than savor the resort's setting, exquisite food, activities and attentive-yet-unobtrusive style of quiet, personal service.

Above all, Posada Del Sol is a resort for divers, and the efficient dive operation delivers with superb diving and superior service. The fleet includes five roomy, custom dive boats. Throughout a stay at Posada Del Sol, divers stay with one boat and get comfortable with one crew (captain and divemasters). As a result, guests get to visit the extensive list of reefs, walls and wrecks with little or no repeats.

There's lots of room to spread out on the boats and under water. Not many divers in the world can boast that they've explored the lush reefs and walls off the nearby island of Barbareta. But once a week, Posada Del Sol runs a day-trip to this near-secret island.

The divemasters like to set up all gear for guests, but your hosts

won't take offense if you prefer to handle your own. The service on the boats includes some nice touches: fruits, snacks, beverages and fresh towels.

The full-service dive center features scuba instruction, three boat dives a day, night dives, and retail, photo and video centers. For imaging buffs, the resort offers E-6 film processing, instruction in underwater photo and video, rentals and suites for viewing and playback.

Posada Del Sol offers a bevy of options for enjoying the resort and Guanaja: freshwater swimming pool; tennis courts; a complete state-of-the-art gym with free weights; Airdyne exercise bike, and universal and Nautilus equipment; archeological and mountain hikes; an outdoor barbecue party with games; and kayaking. Available at an extra charge are a water-taxi tour of Bonacca Town, the "Venice of the Bay Islands"; deep-sea fishing; angling for bonefish and permit on the flats; day tours to the mainland for whitewater rafting or a visit to San Pedro Sula city.

BOOK IT ► Dive packages start at \$900 per person/double occupancy for seven nights. They include three boat dives a day, night dive, all meals, accommodations, and complimentary activities. For information, bookings and air travel reservations, contact the U.S. office of Posada Del Sol: phone (800) 642-DIVE or (561) 624-DIVE.

—Text and Photography by Rob Curran



Sand Dollar Condominium Resort

Your Home Away From Home on Bonaire



Sand Dollar's sprawling nine-acre complex includes 85 private condos, lighted tennis courts, a freshwater pool, the Green Parrot Restaurant and one of the most convenient and complete dive and photo shops you'll ever find.

Officially, August is Family Month for Bonaire and Sand Dollar Condominium Resort. During August, children up to age 15 stay free with parents. Kids can join in the fun with Sand Dollar's kids programs, Sand Penny Club and Ocean's Classroom (offered year-round), plus they'll enjoy special Family Month children's activities like an island excursion, trip to Klein Bonaire, hot dog and video times and much more!

That's not to say that the other 11 months are any less tempting for families. No matter when you go, Sand Dollar is the perfect family vacation destination, serving up a menu of activities to delight guests of all ages and interests. June is the month for the 1997 Nikonos Shoot Out. November is Underwater Photo and Video Month at Sand Dollar. Win three free nights at the resort for taking the best underwater photo or video.

Year 'round, you can experience the best of the island with Sand Dollar's six-day Bonaire Adventure package. Day one, make a boat and beach dive in the Marine Park. Day two, kayak through the mangroves on a guided

Day three is a nature tour of Washington-Slagbaai Park. Day four, guides organize a snorkeling trip to some of Bonaire's richest reefs. Day five, go off the beaten track with a mountain bike tour. Day six, repeat your favorite activity of the week. These adventures are also available à la carte.

Of course, 365 days a year, the specialty of the house is diving. Sand Dollar Dive and Photo is the most diver-friendly and professional PADI Five-Star dive operation on Bonaire. Guests enjoy the freedom to mix shore and boat diving and underwater photography and videography according to wants, needs and whims.

Boats leave at 8:45, 10:30, 1:30 and 3:30—choose the time that suits your schedule. The most popular dive package includes 12 one-tank boat trips including a night boat dive and unlimited air for shore diving any time of the day or night. Small groups are the norm on the fleet of four dive boats.

At Sand Dollar, professional instruction is available from PADI, NAUI and SSI in six languages. Instruction is offered for all ages and levels, from beginner through instruc-

tor. Fit a course into your vacation—new classes start all the time.

Twenty-four hours a day, shore diving is easy. You can dive right off the Sand Dollar dock. Bari Reef, a great spot for close-up photography and videography, is just a few fin kicks from the dive center. You'll need the unlimited tanks for diving the 60 sites that ring the island, just yards from the beach. Throw your gear into a rental jeep for a day of shore diving.

At Sand Dollar Resort, the 85 condominiums were designed as vacation homes. Guest accommodations include studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom condominiums. All feature air-conditioned bedrooms, large living areas with cable TV and modern, tropical decor. Not a single detail of luxury, comfort or practicality has been overlooked: Expansive interiors. Private terrace or balcony with ocean view. Tasteful decorations and comfortable furniture. For eat-in meals, full kitchens with microwave, dishwasher, blender and coffee maker. When you want someone else to do the cooking, the Green Parrot Restaurant is one of Bonaire's most popular eateries and watering holes.

BOOK IT ► During Value Season—May and June, and Dec. 1 to Dec. 20—you can book seven days and pay for only six. You get one free day of accommodations, meals and diving. For more information, reservations and lowest-cost air travel, call (800) 288-4773. To call Sand Dollar direct dial (011) 599-7-8738. The dive shop's phone is (011) 599-7-5252.

—Text by Rob Curran



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In the 1997 *Rodale's Scuba Diving Readers' Choice Awards*, divers ranked the *Nekton Pilot* among the top five live-aboards in the world. With its SWATH (Small Waterplane Area Twin Hull) design, the *Nekton Pilot* offers the amenities and comfort of a cruise ship and stability approaching a land-based resort.

From May to October, the *Nekton Pilot* cruises on two different seven-day itineraries: the Bahama Adventure and Cay Sal Bank.

The Bahama Adventure typifies the diversity of diving in the northern Bahamas: coral gardens, high-profile reefs, wrecks, spectacular walls, and a shark dive. An unforgettable highlight is snorkeling with wild spotted dolphins on White Sand Ridge.

On the Cay Sal itinerary, the *Nekton Pilot* cruises between the Florida Keys and Cuba, through a group of uninhabited islands that encircle a

shallow bank. Cay Sal boasts one of the world's highest concentrations of blue holes. Plus, on the edge of the bank, warm, clear Gulf Stream waters bathe spectacular vertical walls that plunge into the ocean.

Trips on the *Nekton Pilot* include a range of attractive complimentary activities. Snorkel First is a program that features a snorkel pro and separate shallow-water excursions. Between the five dives a day, the crew offers presentations that are fun, educational and entertaining: scuba refresher; buoyancy control; underwater photography and video; fish and coral identification; underwater history and geology of the Bahamas; blue holes. Nekton Cruises even offers open-water certification for free.



BOOK IT ► The Cay Sal Bank and Bahama Adventure run Saturday to Saturday. Each costs \$1,495 pp/do and departs from Fort Lauderdale. Save \$100 on cruises after Labor Day through mid-November. Contact Nekton, your dive travel specialist or travel agent. Phone (800) UW WORLD or (954) 463-9324. E-mail: nekton@gate.net. Web: www.nektoncruises.com.

—Text by Rob Curran

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands

Dive In with Adventure Sports Gizo and the Bilikiki

Locate Australia on a globe. Drag your finger a couple inches northeast, to a point due east of Papua New Guinea. There you'll find the tropical Solomon Islands, an archipelago nation of mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls. The Solomon Islands are a treasure trove for divers: a cornucopia of World War II ship and plane wrecks, brilliant reefs, soft coral gardens, and bountiful sea critters large and small.

Gizo—the second largest town in the Solomons—is home to the full-service dive center Adventure Sports Gizo, founded in 1985. With four dive boats, owners Danny and Kerrie



Kennedy cater to singles, couples and groups. Underwater highlights include the soft coral garden Grand Central Station, the manta dive, three World War II aircraft, and the famed Japanese transport ship *Toa Maru*. Adventure Sports offers both NAUI and PADI training.

The dive center serves all resorts, lodges and guesthouses on the island.

The 125-foot *MV Bilikiki* accommodates 20 passengers in 10 air-conditioned staterooms, each with private shower and toilet. The mother ship deploys two 21-foot aluminum dive

tenders. Each tender drops divers precisely on dive sites and picks them up wherever they surface. The crew's attitude is "we aim to please" throughout all aspects of shipboard life: personalized diving, friendly service and food prepared to perfection. The only time you'll need to touch your diving equipment is when it's on your back—the crew takes care of the rest. The *Bilikiki* is photographer-friendly; onboard you'll find E-6 color processing, multi-format video system, evening slide shows, and large camera tables.

BOOK IT ► For more information on the Solomon Islands and other Pacific destinations, contact Dive Discovery. Phone: (800) 886-7321 or (415) 256-8890. Web: <http://www.divediscovery.com>

—Text by Rob Curran

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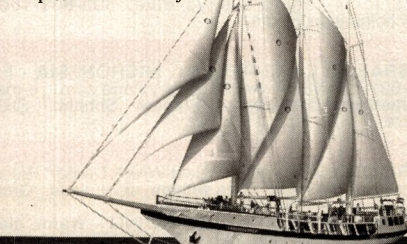
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DON FOSTER'S DIVE CAYMAN - 3 superb dive shops on 7 Mile Beach; Holiday Inn, Radisson Resort & Royal Palms. Call for rates, packages & monthly specials! 800-83-DIVER, fax 972-722-6511.

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DOMINICA TRAVEL SPECIALIST - Wide selection of scuba, vacation & honeymoon economy to luxury resorts. Call LANDFALL ADV. TRVL. - U.S./CANADA 800-525-3833, CA. 510-794-1599.

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FIJI REAL ESTATE - Beachfront lots, islands, diving resorts for sale. Contact TDC, Box 228, Suva, Fiji. Phone 679-311075, fax 679-303160.

FIJI TRAVEL SPECIALIST - Wide selection of budget, luxury, & honeymoon dive/vacation resorts. Customized multiple island packages available. Call LANDFALL ADV. TRAVEL. U.S./CANADA 1-800-525-3833, CA. 510-794-1599.

FLORIDA

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KEY LARGO - Oceanfront luxury villa. 3BR/3BA, secluded beach, pool, tennis, marina, cable, VCR, stereo, security, garage. Rent by wk/mo. Brochure. 404-351-2374.

KEY LARGO LUXURY CONDO - Divers discounts. Pennekamp nearby, 2BR/2BA, pool, tennis, marina, sauna, on water. Rent wk/mo. AMEX. 800-416-9693.

KEY LARGO'S SECLUDED CARIBBEAN PLANTATION - Amy Slate's Amoray Dive Resort. Superb rooms & villas overlooking Florida Bay. Scuba, snorkel, Eco-Tours, underwater & sunset weddings, & USCG Duane dives aboard our new 45' catamaran. Pennekamp, Marine Sanctuary & the Everglades! PADI, NAUI, & BSAC instruction. Great value dive/accommodation packages from \$67.50/day, tanks & weights. Stay 4 nights, 5th night FREE (some restrictions apply). 800-4-AMORAY. E-mail: amoray@pennekamp.com

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KEY WEST - Southpoint Divers. Voted Best Dive Shop in Key West in the Peoples' Choice & Rodale's Readers' Choice Awards. Earn American Airlines frequent flyer miles! 800-891-DIVE. Southpoint@aol.com.

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OCEANVIEW PENTHOUSE CONDO near Pennekamp, 2BR/2BA, sleeps 6, beautifully furnished, clean, private beach, marina, pool, tennis, rent wk/mo. 561-393-6280.

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JAMAICA DIVE CENTRE - Five-Star PADI. Small groups, personalized service, 4 resort hotels, Runaway Bay & Montego Bay. Telephone 809-973-4845, fax 4875. http://www.infochan.com/Jamaqua. E-mail: Jamaqua@InfoChan.com

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BAJA ADVENTURE EXPERTS - Sea of Cortez diving. Los Cabos, East Cape & La Paz. Air/hotel/dive pkgs. contact Cross Adventures 800-246-6226, 310-379-5126, baja@CrossAdventure.com, www.CrossAdventure.com

BAJA/CABO/SEA OF CORTAZ - Tel/fax 011-52-114-30117. CABO ACUADERPORTES - PADI 5-Star, NAUI Pro, SSI. Since 1984. 2 exclusive beachfront watersports centers. Home page: http://www.sierra-computers.com/~cabo

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SCUBADUBA (http://www.scubaduba.com) - The Ultimate Scuba Site on the World Wide Web. Hundreds of scuba links indexed, annotated & searchable. Endless info, images & video clips, fast loading pages, easy to navigate, fun & useful to browse through. Home of the ScubaDuba Top 5.

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FREE DIVE INFO

Simply tear out the reply card, circle the numbers preceding the names of the companies which interest you, fill out your name and address, affix postage, and drop it in the mailbox. You'll soon be receiving information which will help make your diving more enjoyable!

AUSTRALIA

1. DIVE DISCOVERY/REEF EXPLORER
1-800-886-7321 See ad pg. 137

BAHAMAS

2. BAHAMAS TOURISM 1-800-866-DIVE See ad pg. 69
3. DIVE ABACO 1-800-247-5338 See ad pg. 70
4. DIVE DIVE DIVE 1-800-368-3483 See ad pg. 72
5. GREAT ABACAO BEACH RESORT 1-888-478-3525 See ad pg. 137
6. SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE 1-800-223-6961 See ad pg. 72
7. STELLA MARIS 1-800-426-0466 See ad pg. 70
8. STUART COVE'S 1-800-646-3333 See ad pg. 73
9. SUNSKIFF 1-800-331-5884 See ad pg. 137
10. UNEXSO 1-800-992-DIVE (3483) See ad pg. 71
11. VALENTINE'S DIVE CENTER 1-800-383-6480 See ad pg. 138
12. WALKER'S CAY 1-800-513-5257 See ad pg. 73

BAY ISLANDS/HONDURAS

13. ANTHONY'S KEY RESORT 1-800-227-3483 See ad pg. 76
14. BAY ISLANDS BEACH RESORT 1-800-4-ROATAN See ad pg. 77
15. BAYMAN BAY CLUB 1-800-524-1823 See ad pg. 74
16. CASA ROMEO'S 011-504-45-5518 See ad pg. 138
17. FANTASY ISLAND BEACH RESORT 1-800-676-2826 See ad pg. 76
18. POSADA DEL SOL/INN OF THE SUN 1-800-642-3483 See ad pg. 77
19. REEF HOUSE RESORT 1-800-328-8897 See ad pg. 74
20. ROATAN CHARTER, INC. 1-800-282-8932 See ad pg. 75

BELIZE

21. BELIZE TOURIST BOARD 1-800-624-0686 See ad pg. 79
22. BZ TRAVEL/BOTTOM TIME 1-800-382-7776 See ad pg. 79
23. EXPERIENCE THE ADVENTURE TOURS/BELIZE
EXTRAVAGANZA 1-800-815-5019 See ad pg. 78
24. JOURNEY'S END 1-800-460-5665 See ad pg. 79
25. SUNBREEZE BEACH HOTEL 1-800-938-0860 See ad pg. 79
26. TURNEFFE FLATS BELIZE 1-800-815-1304 See ad pg. 79
27. WINDY HILL RESORT 1-800-WINDY 95 See ad pg. 79

BERMUDA

28. BERMUDA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**
1-800-BERMUDA See ad pgs. 35-38
29. BLUE WATER DIVERS 1-441-234-1034 See ad pg. 38
30. FANTASIA DIVING 1-441-236-6339 See ad pg. 38
31. SCUBA LOOK 1-441-293-7319 See ad pg. 38
32. SOUTHSIDE SCUBA 1-441-238-1833 See ad pg. 38

BONAIRE

33. BUDDY BEACH & DIVE RESORT 1-800-433-DIVE See ad pg. 65
34. CAPT. DON'S HABITAT 1-800-327-6709 See ad pg. 64
35. LIONS DIVE HOTEL 1-888-LIONS DIVE See ad pg. 65
36. PLAZA RESORTS BONAIRE 1-800-766-6016 See ad pg. 65
37. SAND DOLLAR CONDOMINIUM RESORT 1-800-288-4773 See ad pg. 63
38. TOURISM CORPORATION OF BONAIRE 1-800-U-BONAIRE See ad pg. 65

BRAZIL

39. DIVE BRAZIL 1-800-990-3839 See ad pg. 116

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

40. TRIMARINE 1-800-648-3393 See ad pg. 81

CAYMAN ISLANDS

41. CAYMAN DIVING LODGE 1-800-TLC-DIVE See ad pg. 86
42. CAYMAN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM 1-800-346-3313 See ad pg. 09
43. DIVI TIARA/DIVI RESORTS 1-800-367-3484 See ad pg. 84
44. DON FOSTER'S DIVE CAYMAN 1-800-83-DIVER See ad pg. 88
45. LITTLE CAYMAN BEACH RESORT/BRAC REEF BEACH RESORT 1-800-327-3835 See ad pg. 88
46. RED SAIL SPORTS 1-800-255-6425 See ad pg. 85
47. SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB 1-800-899-2582 See ad pg. 87
48. SUNSET HOUSE 1-800-854-4767 See ad pg. 89
49. TREASURE ISLAND DIVERS 1-800-872-7552 See ad pg. 87

CURACAO

50. PETER HUGHES DIVING 1-800-932-6237 See ad pg. 66

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

51. AQUA MARINE 1-800-4-GET WET See ad pg. 92
52. BLUE WATERS INN 1-800-4-GET WET See ad pg. 92
53. HIGHTIDE WATERSPORTS 1-800-513-5763 See ad pg. 138
54. MANTA LODGE/TOBAGO DIVE EXPERIENCE 1-800-544-7631 See ad pg. 92
55. R & C DIVERS DEN 1-809-639-8120 See ad pg. 92
56. TRINIDAD & TOBAGO TOURISM 1-888-595-ATNT See ad pg. 93

FIJI

57. AQUA TREK DIVE TRAVEL 1-800-541-4334 See ad pg. 95

FLORIDA

58. GINNIE SPRINGS 1-800-874-8571 See ad pg. 98
59. HYDROSPACE 1-904-234-3063 See ad pg. 98

FLORIDA KEYS

60. AQUA NUTS/KELLY'S ON THE BAY 1-800-226-0415 See ad pg. 97
61. CONCH REPUBLIC DIVERS 1-800-274-DIVE See ad pg. 138
62. KEY WEST DIVERS 1-800-87-DIVER See ad pg. 137
63. TAVERNIER DIVE CENTER 1-800-787-9797 See ad pg. 97

GUADELOUPE

64. GUADELOUPE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM 1-888-4 GUADELOUPE See ad pg. 91

HAWAII

65. ECO-ADVENTURES 1-800-949-3483 See ad pg. 137
66. HAWAIIAN DIVERS 1-800-525-PADI See ad pg. 138

MEXICO

67. BLUE BUBBLE DIVERS 1-800-878-8853 See ad pg. 137
68. CEDAM DIVE CENTERS 011-52-987-35147 See ad pg. 107
69. DIVE HOUSE 1-800-346-6116 See ad pg. 106
70. DIVE PARADISE 1-800-308-5125 See ad pg. 105
71. DIVE TOURS 1-800-433-0885 See ad pg. 104
72. DIVE TOURS/ALLEGRO RESORTS 1-800-433-0885 See ad pg. 103
73. FIESTA AMERICANA COZUMEL REEF HOTEL 1-800-346-6116 See ad pg. 106
74. ISLAND DREAMS TRAVEL 1-800-346-6116 See ad pg. 106
75. PARADISUS COZUMEL 1-888-341-5993 See ad pg. 105
76. PLAZA LAS GLORIAS 1-800-433-0885 See ad pg. 104
77. SCUBA CLUB GALAPAGO 1-800-847-5708 See ad pg. 107
78. TROPICAL TOURS INC. 1-800-711-4700 See ad pg. 102

MIDWEST

79. BONNE TERRE MINE 1-314-731-5003 See ad pg. 137

PACIFIC

80. CONTINENTAL MICRONESIA 1-800-900-7657 See ad pg. 110
81. DIVE DISCOVERY/ADVENTURE SPORTS GIZO 1-800-886-7321 See ad pg. 137
82. DIVE DISCOVERY/BILIKIKI CRUISES LTD 1-800-886-7321 See ad pg. 138
83. FISH 'N' FINS 011-680-488-2637 See ad pg. 109
84. MANTA RAY BAY HOTEL & YAP DIVERS 1-800-DIVE YAP See ad pg. 109
85. MARIANAS VISITORS BUREAU 011-670-664-3223 See ad pg. 108
86. PALAU DIVING CENTER/CARP ISLAND RESORT 011-680-488-2978 See ad pg. 110
87. PALAU PACIFIC RESORT 011-680-488-2600 See ad pg. 110
88. PALAU VISITORS AUTHORITY 011-680-488-2793 See ad pg. 110
89. PETER HUGHES DIVING 1-800-932-6237 See ad pg. 111
90. POSEIDON VENTURES 1-800-954-9334 See ad pg. 109
91. REEF & RAINFOREST WORLDWIDE ADVENTURE TRAVEL 1-800-794-98NR See ad pg. 111
92. SAM'S DIVE TOURS 1-800-886-7321 See ad pg. 111
93. SEAWARD HOLIDAYS/S.S. THORFINN 011-691-330-4302 See ad pg. 111
94. SPLASH 1-800-247-3483 See ad pg. 138
95. TRIP-N-TOUR MICRONESIA 1-800-348-0842 See ad pg. 111
96. TRUK STOP HOTEL 011-691-330-4232 See ad pg. 109

TURKS & CAICOS

98. CAICOS ADVENTURES 1-800-513-8822 See ad pg. 117
99. CLUB CARIB RESORTS 1-800-581-CLUB (2582) See ad pg. 117

100. DIVE PROVO 1-800-1-800-234-7768 See ad pg. 117
101. FLAMINGO DIVERS 1-800-204-9282 See ad pg. 117
102. OASIS DIVERS 1-800-892-3995 See ad pg. 117
103. PROVO TURTLE DIVERS 1-800-833-1341 See ad pg. 117
104. SALT CAY DIVERS 1-888-725-8229 See ad pg. 117
105. TURKS & CAICOS TOURIST BOARD 1-800-241-0824 See ad pg. 117
106. TURTLE IN DIVERS 1-800-359-3483 See ad pg. 117

UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

107. DIVE EXPERIENCE 1-800-235-9047 See ad pg. 118
108. ST. THOMAS DIVING CLUB 1-800-538-7348 See ad pg. 119
109. V.I. DIVERS 1-800-544-5911 See ad pg. 118

DIVE EDUCATION & INSTRUCTION

110. D.A.N. 1-800-446-2671 See ad pg. 50

DIVE EQUIPMENT

111. INTERNATIONAL DIVERS 1-800-257-2822 See ad pg. 06
112. LIBERTY GROUP/GENESIS 1-716-741-4789 See ad pg. 06
113. OZTEX, INC./DIVESKINS 1-800-827-3483 See ad pg. 15
114. RJE INTERNATIONAL, INC./DIVE TRAK 1-800-RJE-8527 See ad pg. 41
115. UWATEC 1-800-951-DIVE (3483) See ad pg. 03
116. ZEAGLE SYSTEMS, INC. 1-813-782-5568 See ad pg. 07

DIVE TRAVEL SPECIALIST

117. BAHIA TOURS 1-800-443-0717 See ad pg. 138
118. BZ TRAVEL 1-800-382-7776 See ad pg. 79
119. CARIBBEAN ADVENTURES/WORLD DIVE ADVENTURES 1-800-934-DIVE See ad pg. 137
120. EXPERIENCE THE ADVENTURE TOURS 1-800-815-5019 See ad pg. 129
121. GREAT SOUTHERN 1-800-748-8733 See ad pg. 139
122. LANDFALL PRODUCTIONS 1-510-794-1599 See ad pg. 138
123. MAYA TOURS 1-800-392-6292 See ad pg. 137
124. PASSPORT TO HEALTH & ADVENTURE 1-800-732-6247 See ad pg. 54
125. SCUBA TRAVEL VENTURES 1-800-289-9009 See ad pg. 138
126. TROPICAL ADVENTURES TRAVEL 1-800-247-3483 See ad pg. 128
127. WATER'S EDGE TRAVEL 1-800-990-3839 See ad pg. 138

MISCELLANEOUS

128. CHARTERNET.COM 1-888-324-4091 See ad pg. 137
129. IDENTITY CHECK PRINTERS See ad pg. 138

LIVE-ABOARDS

130. AGGRESSOR FLEET 1-800-348-2628 See ad pg. 121
131. AQUANAUT (M/S TROPIC SUN) 1-800-327-8223 See ad pg. 126
132. EXPLORER VENTURES, LTD 1-800-322-3577 See ad pg. 125
133. NEKTON DIVING CRUISES 1-800-899-6753 See ad pg. 120
134. OCEANWIDE EXPEDITIONS 1-800-453-7245 See ad pg. 122
92. PETER HUGHES DIVING** 1-800-932-6237 See ad pgs. 57-60
135. POSEIDON VENTURES 1-800-954-9334 See ad pg. 126
136. VALEF YACHTS, LTD. 1-800-223-3845 See ad pg. 122
137. WINDJAMMER 1-800-327-2601 See ad pg. 139

PHOTOGRAPHY

138. ARMATO'S 1-800-628-6801 See ad pg. 16
139. BERGER BROS. 1-800-262-4160 See ad pg. 53
140. IKELITE 1-317-923-4523 See ad pg. 42
141. SEA LIFE (PIONEER RESEARCH) 1-800-257-7742 See ad pg. 15

SPECIAL SECTION BECOMING A DIVE PROFESSIONAL

142. DIVERS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 1-800-634-8377 See ad pg. 49
143. DIVERS UNLIMITED 1-888-232-7234 See ad pg. 48
144. NAUI 1-909-621-5801 See ad pg. 44
145. PADI 1-800-729-7234 See ad pg. 45
146. P.D.I.C. 1-717-342-9434 See ad pg. 46
147. PRO DIVE 1-800-772-DIVE See ad pg. 47

SUBJECT TO CHANGE
INSERTS**

TREASURE

(Continued from page 28)

kingdom down there of low, wide chambers supported by a thousand pillars. Watching Madden do his work—tying off his knotted line just so, following his honed instinct, sniffing for flow, for the main vein—I felt the heat of cave fever, the love of penetration into the void, taking the pulse of the continent, its ceaseless shiftings, its elemental discontents. We found infinite possibilities, but no clear solution to the source of Impossibles.

When we surfaced in the pool we expected a long wait for the snorkel team, but they had already returned.

"It dead-ends," Skiles said.

"You're sure?"

They were dead sure. No more than 400 meters back they'd walled-out the passage. So we kicked and clambered out, confident we'd debunked the myth of the mile-long cave. It was only when we were back in sunlight that we saw the true fork in the tunnel. Aluisio Cardoso, who'd waited for us at the cavern mouth, had led us (misled us?) right past it. And where was Krug's map? A lot of shrugging and rummaging through packs. Someone had left it back at the hotel.

HAWAII OPERATORS

(Continued from page 101)

(808) 661-5195, e-mail: lahdiver@maui.net, internet: www.lahainadivers.com. **Dives** ▶ Maui, Lanai and Molokini. **What sets them apart** ▶ Emphasis on service and comfort, large fleet, experienced instructors. **Booking office** ▶ U.S. Dive Travel. **Best buy** ▶ 6 nights, 9 dives, \$605.50 per person, dbl. occ., plus tax.

Makena Coast Charters

Box 1599, Kihei, HI 96753, (808) 874-1273, fax (808) 879-8201, e-mail: mee@maui.net. **Dives** ▶ Molokini, south shore of Maui. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6-passenger dive boat and trips for experienced divers and snorkelers. **Best buy** ▶ 1/2-day boat trip w/2 dives, \$99.

Maui Dive Shop

Box 1018, Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (800) 542-3483, (808) 879-3388, fax (808) 879-1644, e-mail: mauidive@maui.net, internet: www.mauidiveshop.com. **Dives** ▶ Maui, Molokini, Lanai, Turtle Town. **What sets them apart** ▶ 10 locations, snorkel trips. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages and boat charters vary.

Pacific Dive

1993 S. Kihei Rd., Unit 22, Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (800) 876-5334, (808) 874-5332, fax (808) 667-5331, e-mail: allstar@maui.net. **Dives** ▶ Molokini Crater, Lanai, west and south coasts of Maui. **What sets them apart** ▶ Personal service, one-on-one certification courses. **Booking office** ▶ PADI Travel Network.

Prodiver Maui, Inc.

PO Box 828, Kihei, Maui, HI 96753, (808) 875-4004 **Dives** ▶ Molokini Crater, south and west Maui. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 to 7 divers max., experienced staff.

Scuba Shack

At Poço Encantado, the team has gathered at the top of the ladder, nervously awaiting Mike Madden's return. We spot his bubbles first, and then the tiny black-clad figure, survey pad and pencil in hand, frog-kicking toward us.

"If he comes straight up," Skiles says (meaning the dive has been relatively shallow, easier on veteran bones and joints), "I'm gonna be hating him."

But Madden halts, deep, directly below us, and begins a lengthy series of decompression stops that last almost an hour. "He's back to being my good buddy," Skiles says.

When at last he surfaces, Madden whips off his masks and howls. "I got nitrogen breath!" he says.

"I hear ya, cuz," Skiles says.

The story comes out in excited gasps and sputters. A true power cave, with an entrance equal to Florida's Wakulla Spring: "Just this huge black void!" Madden says. Picking his way along on the ceiling, Madden saw the French line, dead on the bottom, down about 200 feet, then just trailing off in a floating loose end, as

1945 D. S. Kihei Road, Kihei, HI 96753, (800) 367-8088, (808) 891-0500, fax (808) 891-0005, e-mail: scubask@aol.com, internet: www.scubashack.com. **Dives** ▶ South Maui coast, Molokini, Lanai. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI 5-Star facility, nitrox and rebreather training facility.

Trinity Tours

1620 Ainakea Rd., Lahaina, Maui, HI 96761, (800) 621-8942, (808) 661-8085, fax (808) 661-1896, internet: ourworld.com/puserve.com/homepages/guesthouse. **Dives** ▶ Maui. **What sets them apart** ▶ Caters to small groups on beach or night dives. **Booking offices** ▶ Ed Robinson's, Extended Horizons, Mike Severns. **Best buy** ▶ 8 days, 7 nights, bed and breakfast, car rental, 3 days of 2-tank boat dives to Lanai and Molokini, 1 night dive, \$1,300 for 2 people.

OAHU

Aaron's Dive Shop

98-406 Kam. Hwy., Pearl City, Oahu, HI 96782, (808) 487-5533, fax (808) 486-0658, e-mail: aarons@aloha.com, internet: www.aloha.com/~aarons. **Dives** ▶ Oahu. **What sets them apart** ▶ 25 years experience, guides on every dive. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary.

Aloha Dive Shop

Koko Marina Shopping Center, Honolulu, HI 96825, (800) 395-5922, (808) 395-5922, fax (808) 395-8882 **Dives** ▶ Turtle Canyon, Koko Craters. **What sets them apart** ▶ PADI Outstanding Achievement Award, special attention given to students, newly certified and "rusty" divers, established 1970.

Aloha Tower Ocean Concepts

94-547 Ukee St., #303, Waipahu, HI 96797, (808) 537-DIVE, fax (808) 676-0565 e-mail: oceanc@aloha.com, internet: www.aloha.com/~oceanc. **Dives** ▶ West coast, south and north shores. **What sets them apart** ▶ Private instruction 7 days/week, 24 hours/day, guided beach and boat dives.

if the Frenchman had suddenly freaked and retreated. Madden hardly blamed him; he was seriously narced himself: "Dive plan? Who needs a dive plan?" A very seductive cave, Madden says, wide open and very deep. "This place could really reach up and bite you."

But Madden and Skiles are already talking about returning—"In a mobile-home," Madden says, "completely self-contained, with oxygen and nitrox, you know, maybe hang a deco-chamber in the pool." They'll have to reapply to IBAMA, but Encantado is otherwise wide-open for serious research and exploration. "Each of these Chapada caves is a project in itself," Madden says.

For his part, Pablo Koss plans to visit Madden in the Yucatán, get instructor-certified, maybe found his own lineage of Bahian cave divers.

"It's not just about penetration," Skiles says. "Exploration means documentation, cartography, geology, hydrogeology, biology. This week we've mapped old cave and explored new; made contacts and friends. Holistically, as a scouting mission, I'd say it's been a smashing success."

All the more so since, as Madden puts it: "We left the treasure in the cave." ☉

Booking office ▶ PADI Travel Network.

The Dive Authority

333 Ward Ave., Honolulu, Oahu, HI 96819, (808) 536-PADI, fax (808) 676-0565, e-mail: oceanc@aloha.com, internet: www.aloha.com/~oceanc. **Dives** ▶ Oahu, especially the west coast and Waikiki. **What sets them apart** ▶ Centralized location in Honolulu, convenient dive schedules and retail store hours. **Best buy** ▶ Three 2-tank dive package, \$220.

Manta Ray Dives of Hawaii/Rainbow Diver II

P.O. Box 3457, Mililani, HI 96789, (800) 982-6747, (808) 334-1154, fax (808) 334-1158, e-mail: rainbow@rainbowdiver.com, internet: www.rainbowdiver.com. **Dives** ▶ Leeward coast of Oahu, including the Mahi and Makaha Caverns. **What sets them apart** ▶ Glass-bottom dive boat, caters to small groups (10 divers max.), specializes in manta ray night dives on Big Island Kona Coast, Keauhou Bay. **Best buy** ▶ 3 nights, 2 dives, rental car, \$395 per person, dbl. occ.

Surf N Sea Inc.

62-595 Kam. Hwy., Haleiwa, HI 96712, (800) 899-SURF, (808) 637-9887, fax (808) 637-3008 **Dives** ▶ North shore, including Shark's Cove and Three Tables, west side's Kahe Point. **What sets them apart** ▶ Five minutes from sites, caters to small groups, certification and instruction, airfill station. **Best buy** ▶ Dive packages vary. Call for rates.

Waikiki Diving Center

1734 Kalakaua Ave., Honolulu, Oahu, HI 96826, (808) 955-5151, fax (808) 955-6766 **Dives** ▶ Turtle Canyons, Magic Island, Haleiwa Trench, Kahe Point and Y0-257. **What sets them apart** ▶ 6 divers max., turtle encounter dives. **Booking office** ▶ Horizon Hawaii (808-923-2396). **Best buy** ▶ 2-tank boat dives daily, \$75.

DIVE TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

(Continued from page 129)

Egypt, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Turkey.

Neal Watson's Undersea Adventures
(800) 327-8150, (954) 462-3400, fax (954) 462-4100, e-mail: nealwatson@aol.com, internet: www.twofin.com/twofin/undersea.htm. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Honduras, St. Lucia.

Ocean Connection

(800) 365-6232, (281) 996-7800, fax (281) 996-1556, e-mail: star@ghgcorp.com. **Destinations** ► Aruba, Australia, Baja, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, Cancun, Cozumel, Curaçao, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Honduras, Mexico, Palau, Panama, Saba, St. Lucia, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Venezuela, Yucatan.

Oz Dive

(800) 4-PARADISE, (703) 406-2703, fax (703) 406-2704, e-mail: ozdive@worldnet.att.net. **Destination** ► Australia.

Pactours, Inc.

(800) 245-4129, (011) 671-649-3221, fax (011) 671-649-4221, e-mail: pactours@kuentos.guam.net. **Destinations** ► Guam, Hawaii, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Philippines, Pohnpei, Truk, Yap.

PADI Travel Network

(800) 729-7234, ext. 2, (714) 540-7234, ext. 2, fax (714) 540-2983, e-mail: ptnfun@aol.com, internet: www.padi.com. **Destinations** ► Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Barbados, Belize, Bequia, Bermuda, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cancun, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Florida Keys, French Polynesia, Grenada, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Red Sea, Saba, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yap.

Poseidon Venture Tours

(800) 854-9334, (714) 644-5344, fax (714) 644-5392, e-mail: poseidon@mailcalypso.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Borneo, Cayman Islands, Cocos Island, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Maldives, Malpelo, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Panama, Philippines, Pohnpei, Saba, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks & Caicos, Truk, Vanuatu, Yap.

Rascals in Paradise

(800) U-RASCAL, (415) 978-9800, fax (415) 442-0289 **Destinations** ► Alaska, Andaman Islands, Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Barbados, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Guam, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Marianas Islands, Marquesas, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Puerto Rico, Reunion, Saba, St. Barthélemy, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Yap.

Reef & Rainforest**Worldwide Adventure Travel**

(800) 794-9767, (415) 289-1760, fax (415) 289-1763, e-mail: rnrtravel@aol.com, internet: www.reefrainfrst.com. **Destinations** ► Andaman Islands, Aruba, Australia, Azores, Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Guam, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Malaysia, Maldives, Marianas, Marquesas, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Pacific Mexico, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Western Samoa, Yap, Yucatan.

Roatan Charter

(800) 282-8932, (904) 588-4132, fax (904) 588-4158, e-mail: info@roatan.com, internet: www.roatan.com/honduras.htm. **Destination** ► Bay Islands, Honduras.

Rothschild Dive Safaris

(800) 359-0747, (212) 662-4858, fax (212) 749-6172, e-mail: rothschild@diveafaris.com, internet: www.divesafaris.com. **Destinations** ► Andaman Islands, Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, Borneo, Cayman Islands, Christmas Island, Cocos Island, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos, Greece, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Hawaii, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica,

Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Mozambique, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Western Samoa, Yap, Yucatan.

Sand Dollar Tours

(800) 397-2674, (970) 225-2660, fax (970) 225-0904, e-mail: sanddollar@ap-usa.com, internet: www.ap-usa.com/sanddollar. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Cocos Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Fiji, Honduras, Mexico, Micronesia, St. Lucia, Turks & Caicos.

SC Travel Ltd.

(800) 268-6777 (in Canada), (416) 461-2432, fax (416) 461-7979 **Destinations** ► Several; call for details.

Scuba Travel Ventures

(800) 298-9009, (619) 291-9085, fax (619) 291-9088 **Destinations** ► Baja, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Hawaii, Honduras, Malaysia, Micronesia, Palau, Southern California, Turks & Caicos, Yucatan.

Scuba Voyages

(800) 544-7621, (909) 371-1831, fax (909) 279-0478, e-mail: scubavoy@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.scubavoyages.com. **Destinations** ► Belize, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Dominica, Honduras, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tobago, Turks & Caicos.

Sea Fiji Travel

(800) 854-3454, (303) 447-3462, fax (303) 447-3454 e-mail: dive@seafiji.com, internet: www.seafiji.com/dive. **Destinations** ► Fiji.

See & Sea Travel

(800) DIV-XPR, (415) 434-3400, fax (415) 434-3409 e-mail: divxprt@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.divxprt.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Belize, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indian Ocean, Maldives, Malpelo, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Red Sea, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Yap.

South Seas Adventures

(800) 576-7327, (303) 440-8675, fax (303) 823-6654 **Destinations** ► American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Truk, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

Sportours

(800) 660-2754, (818) 555-3333, fax (818) 249-8877, internet: www.sportours.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Cozumel, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Maldives, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Queensland, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Vanuatu, Yap, Yucatan.

Sunburst Hideaways

(800) 972-9795, (541) 426-4863, fax (541) 426-4863 **Destinations** ► Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Honduras.

Take Me, Too!

(800) 494-2836, (805) 486-4486, fax (805) 486-5508, e-mail: tkmetoo@aol.com, internet: superpages.gte.net. **Destination** ► Channel Islands, California.

Terra Firma Adventures

(800) 524-1823, (954) 572-1902, fax (954) 572-1907, e-mail: reservations@baymanbayclub.com, internet: www.baymanbayclub.com. **Destinations** ► Bay Islands, Belize, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru.

The Scuba Mart

(561) 585-2329, fax (561) 585-2329, e-mail: pscubamrt@pb.sef.ln.org. **Destinations** ► Australia, Caribbean, Florida, Micronesia.

Tico Travel

(800) 493-8426, (954) 493-8426, fax (954) 493-8466, e-mail: tico@ga.te.net, internet: www.ticotravel.com. **Destinations** ► Costa Rica, Pacific.

Tierra Mar Travel

(800) 525-5524, (602) 833-4997, fax (602) 898-0194, e-mail: malinda@dancris.com, internet: www.elmar.com. **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, California, Cayman Islands, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, Saba, Truk, Yucatan.

Tiny Bubbles Expeditions

(561) 744-7884, fax (561) 746-7950, e-mail: seiwolf@aol.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Azores, Canadian Arctic, Cayman Islands, Chagos Archipelago, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Galapagos, Panama, Patagonia, Socorro Island, Turks & Caicos.

ToucanTur, Ltd.

(800) 465-0769, (504) 465-0769, fax (504) 464-0325, e-mail: toucantur@ix.netcom.com. **Destination** ► Belize.

Travel Options

(800) 551-2012, (213) 953-0050, fax (213) 953-0070 **Destinations** ► Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Hawaii, New

Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu.

Trip N' Tour Micronesia & Fiji

(800) 348-0842 or (800) 917-2243, (619) 724-5027, fax (619) 724-9897, e-mail: tntmicro@ix.netcom.com, internet: www.empg.com/trip-n-tour. **Destinations** ► Fiji, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Pohnpei, Truk, Yap.

Triton Tours

(800) 426-0226, (504) 464-7964, fax (504) 464-7965, e-mail: goldinfo@acadiacom.net. **Destinations** ► Belize, Cancun, Costa Rica, Honduras.

Tropical Adventures Travel

(800) 247-3483, (206) 441-3483, fax (206) 441-5431, e-mail: 103520.2014@compuserve.com, internet: www.travelsource.com/scuba/tadive.html. **Destinations** ► Andaman Islands, Australia, Azores, Baja California, Belize, Bonaire, Borneo, Cayman Islands, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pohnpei, Saba, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Thailand, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yap, Yucatan.

Tropical Tours, Inc.

(800) 711-4700, (281) 855-6900, fax (281) 855-9139 e-mail: diver@neosoft.com, internet: tropical.scubamaster.com. **Destinations** ► Aruba, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Honduras, Turks & Caicos.

Tropical Travel Representatives

(800) 451-8017, (281) 367-3386, fax (281) 298-2335 e-mail: adventur@tropicaltravel.com, internet: www.tropicaltravel.com. **Destinations** ► Aruba, Belize, Cocos Islands, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Yucatan.

U.S. Dive Travel

(800) 566-6143, (206) 937-7484, fax (206) 933-8075, e-mail: divetrav@aa.net, internet: www.seattleweb.com/divetravel. **Destinations** ► Argentina, Australia, Baja, Belize, Bonaire, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Chile, Cocos Islands, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Egypt, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Saba, St. Kitts, St. Martin, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Venezuela.

Ultimate Dive Travel

(800) 737-3483, (630) 616-9926, fax (630) 616-0727 **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Baja California, Belize, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Fiji, Honduras, Turks & Caicos; various live-aboards.

Undersea Expeditions, Inc.

(800) 669-0310, (619) 270-2900, fax (619) 490-1002, e-mail: underseax@aol.com, internet: www.mindfood.com/gaylesbianscubadiving.html. **Destinations** ► Australia, Baja California, Belize, Cocos Island, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Fiji, Galapagos, Hawaii, Honduras, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Red Sea, Saba, Solomon Islands, Turks & Caicos, Truk, Yap; various live-aboards.

Unirep, Ltd.

(800) 521-7242, (213) 256-1991, fax (213) 256-0647 e-mail: unirep@earthlink.net. **Destinations** ► Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti.

USA Travel Network

(800) 771-1133, (954) 467-1133, fax (954) 467-7544 **Destinations** ► Bahamas, Barbados, Turks & Caicos.

Waterhouse Photo Tours

(800) 272-9122, (305) 451-2228, fax (305) 451-5147, e-mail: photo-tours@aol.com. **Destinations** ► Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Bonaire, California, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Florida, Galapagos, Grenada, Hawaii, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Martinique, Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, St. Martin, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Truk, Turks & Caicos, Tuvalu, US Virgin Islands, Vanuatu, Yap, Yucatan.

Waters Edge Travel

(800) 990-3839, (303) 331-6167, fax (303) 331-6169, e-mail: getwet@watersedgetravel.com. **Destinations** ► Aruba, Australia, Bahamas, Bay Islands, Belize, Bonaire, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Cozumel, Curaçao, Indonesia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Tobago; various live-aboards.

Waterways Travel

(800) 928-3757, (818) 376-0341, fax (818) 376-0353 **Destinations** ► Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Micronesia.

Wet Dreams Dive & Travel

(800) 933-7333, (301) 253-0097, fax (301) 253-0767, e-mail: wet_dreams@qualityservice.com, internet: www.netcom.com/~wtdream. **Destinations** ► Several; call for details.

World Dive Adventures

(800) 934-DIVE, (954) 433-DIVE, fax (954) 434-4282, e-mail: margo@worlddive.com, internet: www.worlddive.com. **Destinations** ► Australia, Cocos Island, Fiji, Galapagos, Maldives, Malpelo Island, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Red Sea, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Truk, Vanuatu, Yap; various live-aboards.

Emergency Weight Belt Ditching

The ability to ditch your weight belt is a skill that is truly a matter of life and death: In virtually all scuba fatalities, victims are found with their weight belts still secured around their waists. By ditching your weight belt, you increase your chances of surviving a diving accident exponentially. Remember: In any underwater emergency, first try to solve the problem under water. If that doesn't work, get positively buoyant and get to the surface.

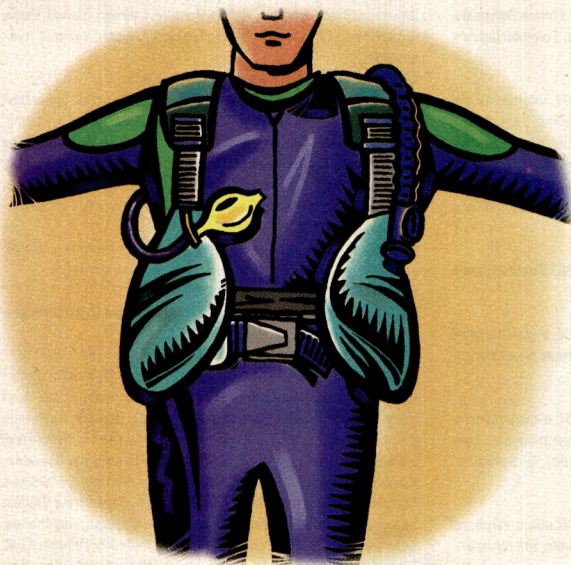
Step 1

Position It

Here's a good rule to live by: *Gear up as if you're going to ditch your weight belt on every dive.* Position the belt around your waist and make sure there's a clear drop zone between your waist and your fins. Be on the lookout for straps, hooks, hoses, gauges, consoles or anything else that might snag the belt if you were to release it.

Question: Should I don my weight belt before or after my BC?

Answer: It doesn't matter, as long as there is a clear drop zone beneath the belt and the BC doesn't cover the buckle.



Step 2

Release It

Practice the quick-draw method of release. Slap your hands against your hips, then slide them up to the belt and forward until they reach the buckle. This ensures you'll find the buckle even if it has shifted away from center. Now, simply release it.

Question: Should my buckle be positioned for a right-hand or left-hand release?

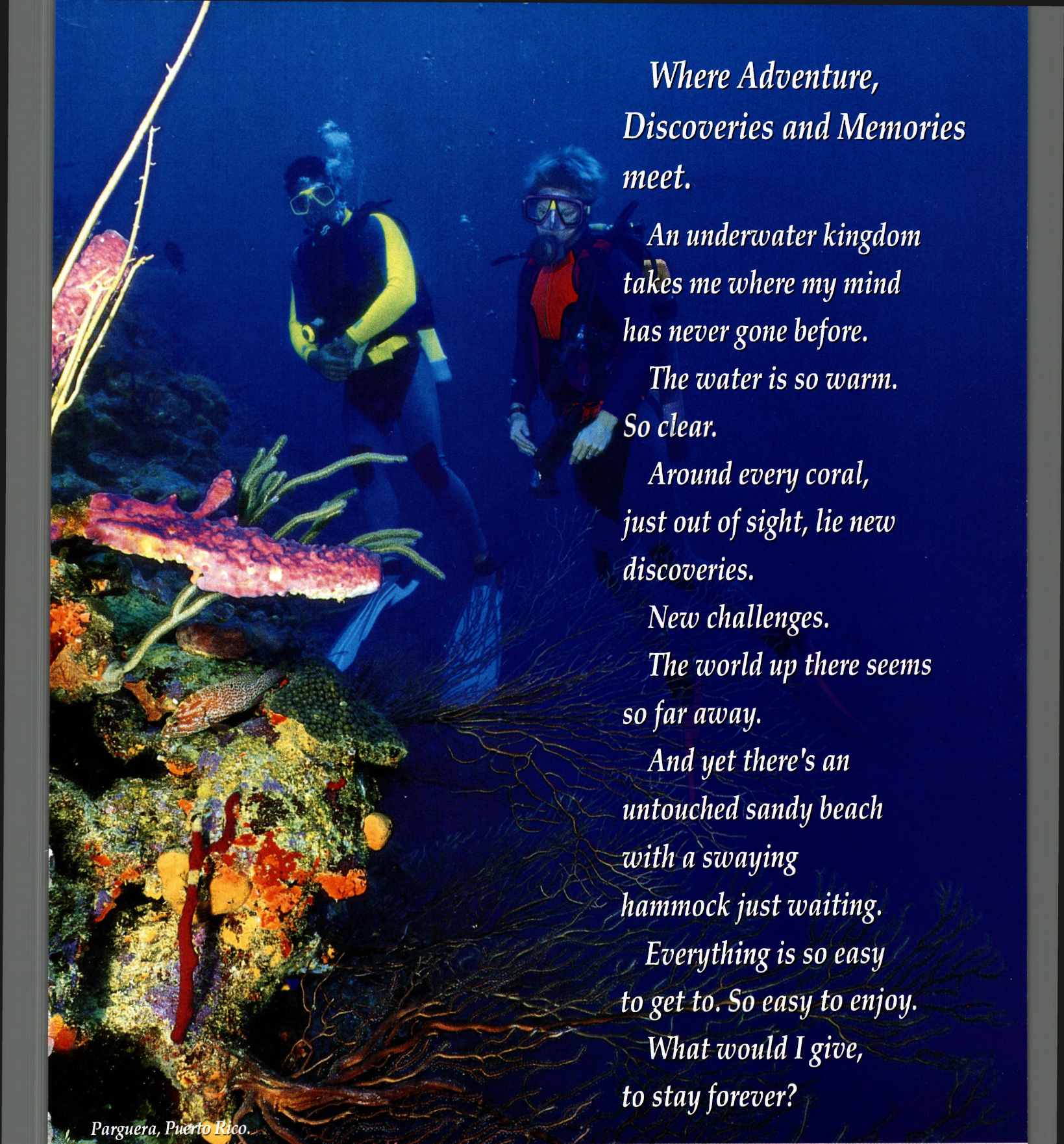
Answer: It doesn't matter, as long as you're comfortable with it, and you and your buddy both know which way it releases.

Step 3

Drop It

Once you've released the belt, pull it completely away from your body, and let it go. If possible, check for other divers below you in the water before dropping your belt. In an emergency, it may be impractical to do this.





*Where Adventure,
Discoveries and Memories
meet.*

*An underwater kingdom
takes me where my mind
has never gone before.*

*The water is so warm.
So clear.*

*Around every coral,
just out of sight, lie new
discoveries.*

*New challenges.
The world up there seems
so far away.*

*And yet there's an
untouched sandy beach
with a swaying
hammock just waiting.*

*Everything is so easy
to get to. So easy to enjoy.*

*What would I give,
to stay forever?*

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